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MEDIEVALISM IN THE MODERN WORLD

ESSAYS IN HONOUR OF LESLIE J. WORKMAN

Edited By
Richard Utz and Tom Shippey

Turnhout: Brepols, 1998

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FRONTISPIECE

LESLIE J. WORKMAN

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EDITORIAL NOTE

The idea for this homage volume was born at the Second Conference of the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, at Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ, in February of 1996. After attending several of the excellent medievalism sections organized by Leslie Workman, I approached some of the presenters in these sections and asked if they might contribute to a Festschrift in Leslie's honor. My proposition was greeted with immediate and universal enthusiasm, and Tom Shippey agreed to co-edit the volume together with me. Our original, ambitious goal to have the collection ready for Leslie's seventieth birthday in 1997 was rendered impossible both by our difficult search for a suitable international publisher and my move to the University of Tübingen for the academic years 1996/97 and 1997/1998.

I would like to express my gratitude to all contributors for their patient support during the slow process of completing this publication; to Tom Shippey (Saint Louis University) for his part in the editorial work; to Geraldine Barnes (University of Sydney), the series editor of *Making the Middle Ages*, and Simon Forde (Brepols Publishers) for their help and encouragement; and to Eugen Seiterich and Christine Baatz (University of Tübingen) for advice on technical questions. Special thanks go to William Calin (University of Florida) for authorizing us to print his short laudatio which he presented at a ceremony held in Leslie's honor at the 1998 Kalamazoo Congress; to Leslie Workman for agreeing to our inclusion of an informal interview now called 'Speaking of Medievalism'; and to Kathleen Verduin (Hope College) for her unwavering organizational and moral support. Finally, I would like to thank my wife and best friend, Anne-Françoise Le Lostec, who would have seen more of me in recent months if the editorial chores had not held me in thrall.

Tübingen, June, 1998 *Richard Utz*

TABULA GRATULATORIA

THE FOLLOWING SCHOLARS WISH to mark this volume by entering their names in a Tabula Gratulatoria in honour of Leslie Workman. In particular they wish this volume to pay tribute to the contribution that Leslie Workman has made to the field of 'medievalism' over many years, and his efforts in reviving this field of study through sessions at the annual Kalamazoo congress on medieval studies, the journal he founded, *Studies in Medievalism*, and biennial international colloquia.

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William Snell
Toshiyuki Takamiya
M.J. Toswell
Richard Utz
Andrew Wawn
Richard C. West

William T. Whobrey
Karl A. Zaenker
Wanda Zemler-Cizewski

and the other contributors to
this volume.

Simon Forde
Brepols Publishers, Saltaire
November 1998

MEDIEVALISM IN THE MODERN WORLD: INTRODUCTORY PERSPECTIVES

RICHARD UTZ AND TOM SHIPPEY

HOMAGE VOLUMES, AS ALICE P. KENNEY and Leslie J. Workman point out in a long and learned review essay for the journal *New York History* in 1974,[1] represent the most problematic among the numerous genres of scholarly publications. Several of the commonly accepted names for the genre – depending on national traditions one can read the German *Festschrift*, the French *Mélanges*, or the Anglo-American *Miscellany* or *Essays in Honour of...* – hint at the potentially heterogeneous character and quality of the contributions to homage volumes, often enough united solely by their common intention of honouring a colleague, former teacher or friend on the occasion of an anniversary or retirement.

Furthermore, while the multi-facetted content of *Miscellanies* makes them difficult to review for scholars and hard to index for bibliographic and statistical purposes, librarians and bibliographers can then encounter the additional problem of locating volumes published in small editions or with so-called 'vanity presses', in which, as is often said, valuable articles are merely buried.[2] Finally, the disturbing tendency of editors to invite as many contributors as possible to create hefty tomes, and so demonstrate the importance of the scholar being honoured, can lead to a lack of control over quality and, once again, cohesion.[3]

We naturally hope that *Medievalism in the Modern World* will belong among those examples which present the better features and the great potential of the *Miscellany* genre. Firstly, all essays in this publication have been written by a select number of experienced practitioners of medievalism, most of whom also happen to be friends and/or collaborators of the honoree. While using different approaches and discussing topics in a variety of specialized fields, all contributors

---

[1] 'Volumes of Homage: Festschriften in America', *New York History: Quarterly Journal of the New York State Historical Association*, 55.4 (1974), 459–80. We would like to thank Kathleen Verduin for providing us with valuable bibliographic information for this introductory essay.

[2] See S. Griswold Morley, 'Development of the Homage-Volume', *Philological Quarterly*, 8 (1929), 61–68 (p. 65).

[3] As early as 1877, the *Festschrift* for the famous historian, Theodor Mommsen, united seventy-eight essays. As recently as 1989, an anglicist, Otto Hietsch, attempted to outdo all previous publications by asking the editors of his *Festschrift* to invite one hundred contributors. *Language and Civilisation: A Concerted Profusion of Essays and Studies in Honour of Otto Hietsch*, ed. by Claudia Blank and others (Frankfurt: Lang, 1992), appeared in two tomes of more than 800 pages each.

clearly centre on negotiating the reception of medieval culture in the Early Modern, Modern, and Contemporary periods, thus presenting a broad and representative picture of current research in medievalism. Secondly, the book's quality and its wide distribution is further guaranteed through its acceptance by Brepols, a noted international publisher, as the inaugural volume of a new Brepols series, *Making the Middle Ages*, thus signifying the coming of age of the term and subject of medievalism in the larger academic lexicon.

There is one final but noteworthy difference between the 'usual' kind of homage volume and Medievalism in the Modern World: whereas many *Miscellanies* are awarded to professors with long and distinguished careers at research institutions and with large numbers of former doctoral advisees and students to act as editors of and contributors to such publications, the current collection honours the achievement of an independent scholar who has never enjoyed the advantages of affiliation with a famous academic institution, but who has nevertheless managed to establish an entire subfield of investigation. The point is put even forcefully in William Calin's speech given on the occasion of the presentation of the essays in this volume to Leslie Workman at the Kalamazoo conference of 1998, which we are glad to include at the end of this volume. And since such an exceptional achievement is an interesting occurrence in the history of medieval scholarship as such, this volume also includes toward the end an interview with Leslie Workman which offers something like a 'passionate memoir' of the genesis of medievalism. But one may repeat that this volume, like Leslie Workman's career, owes nothing to the practice of academic 'networking', whether this be good or ill.

About Leslie Workman's decisive role in founding, shaping, and institutionalizing academic medievalism there can be no doubt: from the mid-1970s onward, he organized dozens of special sections at a large number of conferences (especially at the two most important annual International Medieval Congresses at Kalamazoo and Leeds) and established the International Conference on Medievalism (until 1993 called the General Conference on Medievalism), together with an accompanying series of conference proceedings, *The Year's Work in Medievalism*[4]; also in 1976, he founded *Studies in Medievalism* (the

[4] The conferences were held at University of Notre Dame (1986 and 1987), the Newberry Library and Northeastern Illinois University (1988), the United States Military Academy, West Point (1989), Burg Kaprun, Austria (jointly with the 5th Symposium on *Mittelalter-Rezeption*, 1990), the University of Delaware (1991), the University of South Florida (1992), the University of Leeds, England (1993), Montana State University (1994), the Higgins Armory Museum, Worcester, MA (1995), Kalamazoo College (1996), Canterbury Christ Church College (1997), and Rochester, NY (1998). So far, the following conference proceedings have appeared in print: *Mittelalter-Rezeption V/The Year's Work in Medievalism 5*, ed. by Ulrich Müller and Kathleen Verduin (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1996); *The Year's Work in Medievalism 4, 1991*, ed. by Michael Rewa (Holland, MI: *SIM*, 1996). The proceedings volumes of the 1993, 1994, and 1995 conferences are in preparation.

journal was first published privately; since 1991 it has been issued by Boydell & Brewer, Cambridge), the journal which has ever since given an official and widely-heard voice to the subject; he has accompanied and guided the negotiation of medievalism in his numerous 'Editorials' and 'Prefaces' in *Studies in Medievalism* as well as in several other publications,[5] has managed to propagate medievalism through sending out a *Medievalism Newsletter* and through writing research reports for North American, European, and Japanese publications,[6] and has connected work on the reception of medieval culture with corresponding

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[5] See 'Editorial', *Medievalism in England*, ed. by Leslie J. Workman, *Studies in Medievalism* (henceforth cited as *SIM*) I.1 (Spring 1979), 1–3; 'Editorial', *Medievalism in America*, ed. by Leslie J. Workman, *SIM*, I.2 (Spring 1982), 1–5; 'Editorial', *Twentieth Century Medievalism*, ed. by Jane Chance, *SIM*, II.1 (Fall 1982), 3–6; 'Editorial'; *Medievalism in France*, ed. by Heather Arden, *SIM*, II.2 (Spring 1983), 1–4; 'Editorial notes', *Dante in the Modern World*, ed. by Kathleen Verduin, *SIM*, II.3 (Spring 1983), 4–5; 'Editorial', *Modern Arthurian Literature*; ed. by Veronica M. S. Kennedy, *SIM*, II.4 (Fall 1983), 1–6; 'Editorial', *Medievalism in France 1500–1750*, ed. by Heather Arden, *SIM*, III.1 (Fall 1987), 1–3; 'Introduction', *Medievalism in American Culture: Special Studies*, ed. by Bernard Rosenthal and Paul Szarmach, (Binghamton, NY: *SIM* / Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1987), ix–xiv; 'Editorial notes', *Architecture and Design*, ed. by John R. Zukowsky, *SIM*, III.2 (Fall 1990), 110–11; 'Editorial notes', *Inklings and Others*, ed. by Jane Chance, *SIM*, III.3 (Winter 1991): 238–39; 'Editorial notes', *German Medievalism*, ed. by Francis G. Gentry, *SIM*, III.4 (Spring 1991), 395–6; 'Editorial: The New Studies in Medievalism', *Medievalism in England*, ed. by Leslie J. Workman, *SIM*, IV (1992), 1–4; 'Editorial', *Medievalism in Europe*, ed. by Leslie J. Workman, *SIM*, V (1993), 1–2; 'Preface', *Medievalism in North America*, ed. by Kathleen Verduin, *SIM*, VI (1994), 1; 'Editorial I', *Medievalism in England II*, ed. by Leslie J. Workman and Kathleen Verduin, *SIM*, VII (1995), 1–2; 'Preface', *Medievalism in Europe II*, ed. by Kathleen Verduin, *SIM*, VIII (1996): 1–2; 'Editorial', *Medievalism and Romanticism, 1750–1850*, ed. by Leslie J. Workman; with the assistance of Kathleen Verduin and Toshiyuki Takamiya, *Poetica: An International Journal of Linguistic-Literary Studies* 39/49 (Special issue for 1993), iii–iv.

[6] 'A Panel Discussion among Leslie J. Workman, T. A. Shippey, Allen J. Frantzen, Paul E. Szarmach, Richard J. Utz, and Arthur F. Kinney', *The Future of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Problems, Trends, and Opportunities in Research*, ed. by Roger Dahood (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), pp. 3–7; 'Modern Medievalism in England and America', *Mittelalter-Rezeption V/The Year's Work in Medievalism 5*, ed. by Ulrich Müller and Kathleen Verduin (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1996), pp. 1–23; 'Studies in Medievalism Past and Present', *Medieval English Studies Newsletter* (Centre for Medieval English Studies, University of Tokyo), 25 (December 1991), 23–26 (repr. in *Medievalism and Romanticism, 1750–1850*, ed. by Leslie J. Workman, *Poetica*, 39/40 (Special Issue for 1993), 41–44; 'Medievalism in America: The First Decade', *Mittelalter-Rezeption III: Gesammelte Vorträge des 3. Salzburger Symposions: 'Mittelalter, Massenmedien, Neue Mythen'*, ed. by Jürgen Kühnel and others (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1988), 143–46.

research concentrations, notably Arthurian Studies and Feminism.[7] Most recently, he has established a summer seminar on medievalism in connection with the University of York in England.

A reading of Leslie Workman's scholarly essays and editorial texts since the mid-1970s affords a revealing look at the obstacles in the way of establishing medievalism as a conceptual framework that would be inclusive of the various ways in which post-medieval minds remembered the Middle Ages. Sharing Norman Cantor's paradigm of the unique 'continuity' in the political and social development of Anglo-American societies, Workman conceived of medievalism in the first place as a 'peculiarly English phenomenon' (a view in fact challenged now by German and Danish contributions to this volume).[8] At the same time, he vociferously defended the term 'medievalism' against pre-established notions of it, accepted by literary historians and medieval scholars alike, as a mere offshoot of either romanticism or Victorianism, an area not to be taken seriously by those interested in discovering the Middle Ages itself.[9] But although the credibility of the term could be established by collecting and presenting the common denominators in the various post-medieval reinventions of medieval culture in the texts of Spenser and Scott, Hugo and Hardy, Cervantes and Rossetti, Walpole and Wagner, Twain and T. H. White, Curtius and C. S. Lewis, those working in medieval studies remained resistant to investigating 'the process by which their

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[7] 'Medievalism', *The Arthurian Encyclopedia*, ed. by Norris J. Lacy (New York: Garland, 1985), pp. 387–91; 'Medievalism Today', *Medieval Feminist Newsletter*, 26 (Spring 1997), 29–33. Additional publications by Workman treating medievalist topics include: '"My First Real Tutor": The Correspondence of John Ruskin and Charles Eliot Norton', *The New England Quarterly*, 62.4 (1989), 572–86; 'To Castle Dangerous: The Infuence of Walter Scott', in *Castles: An Enduring Fantasy*, ed. by Naomi Kline (Gloucester: Hammond Castle Museum, 1985), pp. 45–50; 'Ruins, Romance, and Reality: Medievalism in Anglo-American Imagination and Taste, 1750–1840', *Winterthur Portfolio*, 10 (1975), pp. 131–63 (co-authored with Alice P. Kenney).

[8] 'Medievalism and Romanticism', *Medievalism and Romanticism, 1750–1850*, ed. by Leslie J. Workman, *Poetica*, 39/49 (Special issue for 1993), 1-41 (pp. 6–8), and 'Modern Medievalism in England and America', p. 3. For Cantor's explanations, see *Inventing the Middle Ages*, p. 47, and *The English: A History of Politics and Society to 1760* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), pp. 14–15.

[9] See, e.g., the 'Editorial' to *SIM*, I.1 (Spring 1979), 2: 'The perception of medievalism has been obscured by confusion between medievalism and romanticism, by confusion between revival and survival, and by the fact that since 1914 we no longer look to the past for models. For these reasons medievalism has attracted little scholarly attention, even though medieval studies flourish: the situation at the end of the nineteenth century, when a serious critic could define romanticism as "the reproduction in modern art and literature of the life and thought of the Middle Ages" has been reversed.' On Victorianism and medievalism see 'Editorial: The New Studies in Medievalism', *SIM*, IV (1992), 2.

subject [...] reached them'.[10] In the early 1980s, in an effort to distinguish and institutionalize medievalism as a field of investigation, Leslie Workman himself tried to uphold and enforce a clear separation between medieval studies and medievalism.[11] As late as 1987, he claimed that any serious study of medievalism had to include three things: 'the study of the Middle Ages, the application of medieval models to contemporary needs, and the inspiration of the Middle Ages in all forms of art and thought', thus implying a distinction between a (scientific) study of the Middle Ages and the (romantic, Victorian, etc.) medievalistic application of past ideas to respective contemporary situations.[12]

In 1991, however, Norman Cantor's controversial book, *Inventing the Middle Ages*, became the first monograph to contend in a serious manner that the multitude of scholarly endeavors to recuperate the *Medium Ævum* had only resulted in so many (subjective) reinventions of that time period. Thus, Cantor's thesis propagated something like a *translatio studii* from medieval studies to medievalism and validated – with some support coming from the postmodern postulates of the so-called 'New' Medievalists – the new paradigm of medievalism as inclusive of any and all previous and future attempts at rewriting and/or rethinking the medieval past.[13] Since 1995, Leslie Workman has embraced Cantor's insights in his editorials by stating that 'Medievalism and Medieval Studies might well be defined as the Middle Ages in the contemplation of contemporary society' or – with a hint at his preferred methodology – that medievalism is the '*process* of creating the Middle Ages' (our italics).[14] With these most recent, universal implications Workman has provided the academic study of medievalism with the definitive comprehensiveness which the epigraph of *Studies in Medievalism*, written by Lord Acton as early as 1859, promised all along:

> Two great principles divide the world, and contend for the mastery, antiquity and the Middle Ages. These are the two civilizations that have preceded us, the two elements of which ours is composed. All political as

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[10] 'Editorial: The New Studies in Medievalism', *SIM*, IV (1992), 3.

[11] 'Editorial', *SIM*, I.2 (Spring, 1982), 4.

[12] 'Editorial', *SIM*, III.1 (1987), 1.

[13] On the nature of this paradigm shift see Richard J. Utz, 'Resistance to (The New) Medievalism? Comparative Deliberations on (National) Philology, *Mediävalismus*, and *Mittelalter-Rezeption* in Germany and North America', *The Future of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. by Roger Dahood (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), pp. 151–70. Cf. also Workman's acknowledgment ('Editorial: The New Studies in Medievalism', *SIM*, IV (1992), 3) that 'the idea of the Middle Ages as continually in creation is certainly in harmony with "postmodern" criticism'.

[14] 'Editorial', *SIM*, VII (1995), 2; 'Editorial', *SIM*, VIII (1997), 2. For a similar equasion of medieval studies and medievalism in Germany, see the entries *Mediävistik*, *Mediävalismus*, and *Mittelalter-Rezeption* in the widely-used *Sachwörterbuch der Mediävistik*, ed. by Peter Dinzelbacher (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1992).

> well as religious questions reduce themselves practically to this. This is the great dualism that runs through our society.[15]

And yet medievalism, it could be said, remains something 'in the air until somebody draws a shape around [it]'.[16] In a sense this volume draws the shape, or alternatively provides an ostensive definition of medievalism, by giving a representative sample of what it is that students of medievalism study. We have divided the twenty-four contributions here into five major areas, some obvious, some less so. If medievalism embraces 'the use of medieval models as patterns of social action or artistic creation', as claimed by Leslie Workman in his first *Studies in Medievalism* editorial in 1979,[17] then one can see the latter in our sections 3 and 4, on 'Bygone Medievalisms' and 'Contemporary Medievalisms' respectively, while the former is strongly represented in section 2, 'Appropriating the Past'. Sections 1 and 5, however, take us into areas not noticed, or not foregrounded, in 1979. Section 5, on 'Medievalism and the Academy', embraces the paradigm-shift of 1991 mentioned above; while section 1 appropriately tends to scrutinize the whole question of the origins of medievalism, and the concept of the *Medium Ævum*, the 'Middle' age itself. But although this section is strongly oriented towards history, and the earliest periods of it considered here, it also, like the phenomenon of medievalism itself, remains of urgent contemporary importance, culturally, nationally, and furthermore (and regrettably) nationalistically and even politically.

To begin now at the beginning, it is evident that one cannot frame a concept of a 'Middle Age' or 'middle period' until one has a sense of two ends – or rather, as it often appears, of two cultural peaks with an unfortunate trough in between. To discuss medievalism at all is (or was) to assert a kind of superiority. And this assertion is clear enough in several of the scholarly works cited by the contributors to section 1. At the Salem witch trials of 1692, declares Marion Starkey as cited by Bernard Rosenthal:

> thinking people in Massachusetts passed over the watershed that divides the mystery and magic of late medieval thinking from the more rational climate of opinion referred to as 'the Enlightenment'.

Other 'watersheds' or 'redemptive moments' have been seen, for instance, in the discovery and conquest of America, that New World unknown to either ancients or medievals, in the recovery of humanism from the dust and oblivion of monastic centuries, in the whole notion of a literary and scientific 'Renaissance'.

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[15] Acton's statement is from an unpublished paper written about 1859, printed in Herbert Butterfield, *Man On His Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), p. 212.

[16] The citation is Leslie Workman's. See Richard Utz, 'Speaking of Medievalism: An Interview with Leslie Workman', printed in the 'Documents' section in this volume.

[17] 'Editorial' to *SIM*, I.1 (Spring 1979), 1.

Yet one by one the contributors to section 1, ' "Watersheds" Re-examined', demonstrate the fallibility or incompleteness of such intellectual structures. Theresa Ann Sears shows how the discoverers and *conquistadores* of America, strongly conscious of how little they were 'in control of circumstances' and how great was the 'narrative and rhetorical problem' which they faced, fell back on or perhaps one should say eagerly embraced the images of medieval romance. Don Quixote, that arch-medievalist, has long been felt to have lost the literary argument to the proponents of the novel and of sensible bourgeois culture; but possibly Quixotism did not die, only went overseas (from where, one might add, it has been continually and ever-increasingly re-exported, see further the interesting work of David Quint).[18] Meanwhile, as John Simons demonstrates (in the process exemplifying further from his own experience the everyday nature of a kind of medievalism even in absolutely contemporary English experience), one can find – one cannot except by wholly selective reading *avoid* finding – 'at the very heart of the circles which are more usually associated with the new literature of the English Renaissance' a group of writers still deeply involved with medieval chivalric texts and medieval manuscripts. Without an awareness of the highly complex nature of such interactions one cannot form 'a full picture of the textures of Elizabethan literary culture'. The point is corroborated by Richard Osberg's close study of one moment and one group of texts attempting to capture it: The entry into London in 1533 of Queen Anne Boleyn, the hope of the future, the intended mother of the Tudor heir, the Tudor rose springing from the apparently dead stump of the wars of York and Lancaster – an event commemorated by what seems an immense overkill of the up-to-date, as Osberg says, 'learned literary allusion, laboured Latinity, and the regnant new Humanism'. Yet still entwined with the images of this 'Reformation moment' are the powerful images of the allegedly rejected Catholic past, the *radix Jesse*, the stalk and the flower, Anne as Mary: As Sears says in her quite different context, medievalism here is 'not a temptation to resist, but rather a strategy to embrace'. One could add that a further parallel between Osberg and Simons, and Sears also, might be seen in Henry VII's attempt to annex the Arthurian story for political purposes by naming his eldest son, Henry VIII's brother, Arthur, and by the sometimes extremely angry responses of the early sixteenth century to Polydore Vergil's attempt to produce a 'more rational climate of opinion' about the medieval British hero. Again and again, to return to Rosenthal's study, one finds kings, judges, writers and conquerors at allegedly 'watershed' moments turning to a medieval past 'to find in its fictions the stories that would justify what was happening in the present'. Nor is the process one which can be safely distanced, for if one looks ahead to section 4 of this volume, and to essays such as Gwendolyn Morgan's, this 'malign medieval world' is for too many of our fellow-citizens, still 'the place, after all, where witches live'.

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[18] David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and generic form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

It is also the place from which political authority can be derived. This point has been made with great force, as regards English history, first by Christopher Hill and then at more length by Clare Simmons, in their expositions of the theory of early Saxon liberty suppressed (but not eliminated) by 'the Norman yoke'.[19] The five contributions assembled in section 2 of this volume however demonstrate what a battleground the medieval past has been, and in how many ways it has been raided, appropriated, and re-appropriated by medievalizers of all political persuasions. The clearest case (we take them here out of the roughly chronological order in which they are printed) is perhaps that discussed by David Barclay: medievalizing pageants staged by King Frederick William (or Friedrich Wilhelm) of Prussia with the deliberate aim of countering the revolutionary festivals of the previous generation, and creating a 'dream of order' in the Middle Ages 'in the service of conservative ideological stabilization', and in the interests of one of the most modern and least medievally-grounded of European states. By contrast, English radicals were active in creating images of popular freedom in the Middle Ages, and locating their contemporary demands in immemorial tradition. But this led them into a series of further contradictions or paradoxes, as Clare Simmons demonstrates in her piece on Magna Carta (or Charta) and 'the absent presence'. Was freedom to be found in a document, or in the absence of documentation? Should it be bolstered by claims for precedent, or by contempt for precedent? In the end, Simmons argues, images like those created by Shelley repeat the belief that 'the true route to English freedom is at the same time forward and backwards'. R. J. Smith's detailed study of the reactions, both legendary and legalistic, to one particular, local and anomalous medieval 'survival' – the Kentish custom of 'gavelkind', not abolished till 1925 – shows in one way how difficult medievalism could be, for stories like the Swanscombe legend 'suited the needs of no party exactly', but also how potentially powerful it was, with figures of the stature of Thomas Jefferson using medievalist arguments in the entirely practical issue of settling the law codes of the emergent United States of America (another instance, referring back to section 1 above, of the revision of what seems at first sight an unmistakable 'watershed' moment).

In quite different ways, but with nevertheless an underlying and potentially ominous connection, Ulrich Müller and Roger Simpson consider national icons, the one German, the other English. To speak in entirely contemporary terms, the current German national anthem, 'Deutschland, Deutschland über alles', played at every international football match, has not lost its power to alarm and repel even Germany's closest allies, with what seems to be an ever more likely claim to

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[19] Christopher Hill, 'The Norman Yoke', in *Puritanism and Revolution: Studies in Interpreting the English Revolution of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. by Christopher Hill (London: Mercury, 1958), and Clare Simmons, *Reversing the Conquest: History and Myth in Nineteenth Century British Literature* (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1990).

world domination. Its history goes back to 1203, when the poet Walther von der Vogelweide composed what appears to be a response to early anti-German feeling. Since then, as Müller shows, it has undergone all kinds of vicissitudes, many of them ironic. The modern form of the anthem was composed on what was then British territory; it acquired new meanings in 1914, and again in the 1930s; but was accepted by the well-meaning Weimar Republic, and despite banning in 1945 has been re-consecrated (with a return perhaps, in intention, to its original peaceful sentiment) first by West Germany and then by the new united Germany. Is it the case that Germany, more than other nations, has an 'unmasterable past' symbolized in this song? Roger Simpson's study of the English icon of St George suggests perhaps that it does not. For while the English St George appears to have been eclipsed by the British King Arthur for many centuries, he has retained a life in both high and low culture; and despite the official disapproval and discouragement of all such marks of English nationalism (England, alone among the competitors in the 1998 World Cup, still has *no* national anthem and unlike Scotland has to make do with that of the United Kingdom), a defiant population has begun to re-invent them. It is perhaps appropriate for the editors of this volume, one German, one English, to declare separately that, on the one hand, the 'Lied der Deutschen' is taken in its medieval spirit, and on the other, that the English aspiration towards full autonomy can find some sympathy: medievalism exposes sensitive issues.

The third section of this volume turns to the familiar ground of literary creation, but once more exposes the deep fissures and contradictions between medievalist ideals. These are especially marked in English literature, where a split between pre-Conquest and post-Conquest literature, language, and politics has long been recognized. In one way this split resulted in the creation of two medievalizing ideals, which one might call (following the lead of Alice Chandler in this volume) 'chivalry' and 'heroism' – the former post-Conquest, romantic and sentimental, oriented towards France and Italy, the latter pre-Conquest, self-consciously masculine and Teutonic, glorifying ruggedness and martial virtue. A further complexity was introduced into the latter by the discovery (rather than the recovery) of Norse literature by scholars from the sixteenth century on. This added an element to the history of literature which was unknown to all but the fringes of Europe during the Middle Ages themselves; and added a further problem-cum-opportunity in self-definition for English and even more for Scottish Victorians, as they were left free to decide whether they wished to be regarded as essentially Teutonic or essentially Scandinavian. The poem whose reception is studied here by Tom Shippey served for many years as the *locus classicus* (or anti-Classicus) for the image of the Norseman, death-defying, skull-drinking, filled with 'berserk' fury. It was an image at once tantalizing, potentially flattering, and potentially embarrassing; and has retained its power in all these dimensions up to the present day. Alice Chandler's study of Thomas Carlyle shows the insidiousness of the image, as it seduced Carlyle from relative innocuousness into a proto-Nietzschean worship of heroism and force. Medievalism could, as Chandler notes, nourish

creeds 'both of democratic renewal' (see Simmons) 'and totalitarian destructiveness'. Yet it is idle to deny the appeal of such images, exemplified here with striking force by Viktor von Scheffel's novel *Ekkehard*, issued in 284 editions between 1855 and 1916, edited in critical form by no less a philologist than Friedrich Panzer, and still present and potent in local terms (after a long eclipse) even now. Professor Wunderlich's dismissal of Scheffel as 'an emulator without any real creative talent of his own' is perhaps too harsh: He must, one feels, have had *something* to inspire such long-term interest and response, even if that something has much more to do with his own time than with the Middle Ages. If Carlyle used medievalism to berate his age, Scheffel used it more successfully and no more distortedly to soothe or flatter.

The last three essays in this section belong very much to the other side of the chivalric/heroic divide, if divide it is. Felicia Bonaparte, like the contributors to section 1, takes on what appears to be rather unpromising material in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Wilde did after all declare himself committed to an aestheticism which he furthermore located in the Hellenic ideal. Of Lord Acton's 'two great principles [which] divide the world', he preferred that of Classicism. Yet, as Bonaparte shows, he was capable nevertheless of using aspects of the other principle, tempering his aestheticism with ethical concern, dramatizing ethical concern through that most evidently ethical of medieval genres, the allegorical morality play. William Calin's study of a forgotten dramatist of the Edwardian age, Andrew Phillips, meanwhile shows how Dante had been rescued for and promoted into the mindset of educated English culture: So much so that Canto V of his *Inferno* was capable of functioning as an 'intertext' in popular drama, as the story of the *Prose Lancelot* had functioned in its turn for Dante. (Like several contributors, it is notable that Calin ascribes his interest in his area of study to childhood experience, when old books still on bookshelves might be taken up by the innocent reader without any sense of 'canonicity'; another marked feature of the modern scholarly recovery of medievalism is that it allows us to rescue works as far apart as the plays of Andrew Phillips or 'The Death-Song of Ragnar Lodbrog' from long-endured canonical exclusion.) At the end of this section, however, Kathleen Verduin's essay on the 'cultural archaeology' of E. M. Forster reinforces both Bonaparte's and Calin's theses by showing how the Classical/medieval divide was extended by Forster, following ample Victorian precedent, into an opposition of sexual vitality and celibacy, of candour and chivalry, and in his mind at least incipiently of masculine and feminine, homo- and heterosexual. Forster being hustled out of the country by his mother days after the Wilde scandal broke in 1895, and Forster's strongly-expressed dislike of the 'morbid' and 'ungenial' Dante, in their different ways explain and confirm his status as a major 'anti-medievalist'.

Yet Forster was not alone in his construction of the 'secret life', that 'site where the sovereign imagination [...] continues to construct a past it can call home', as the essays on 'Contemporary Medievalisms' bring home with increasing personal force. The compulsive nature of modern constructions of the

medieval is brought out by William Paden's careful demonstration of the wild anachronisms underlying Ingmar Bergman's famous film, *The Seventh Seal*: Crusades, plagues, flagellants, the burning of witches – these co-existed nowhere except in Bergman's imagination (and now, of course, in the imaginations of millions of viewers of the film). But as Paden points out (a suggestion gratefully echoed by one of the editors), when one is dealing with simulacra, 'With the effacement of the original, the copy loses its subaltern status'. In this respect medievalism and the medieval, popular art and professional history, are potentially and often actually opposed: A confrontation not yet theorized. Rosemary Welsh's essay on the 'theorization' of another popular icon, *Gone with the Wind*, accordingly succeeds in demonstrating another case, like Forster's, of the construction of a 'past to call home' in the bringing of the American Civil War into line with ancient narrative patterns ('eternal time') and the anxieties of 1939 ('real time'). Yet in doing so she appears to open up another critical *mise-en-abîme*. For how far, one wonders, are the ancient patterns of 'Celtic' mythology (a strongly anachronistic term) themselves a construction of modernity, integrated into the mythical history of America? Gwendolyn Morgan's resolutely up-to-date piece makes a similar point especially forcefully, as she shows how images of 'the immortal' in popular American culture are brought, in one sense, into 'updated morality plays', but in another sense used to avoid moral responsibility, and to create a strongly-desired image of immortality without the need for resurrection. Here the medievalizing impulse betrays ominous connections with millennialism, gnosticism and apocalypticism – connections which Forster would probably have recognised and assented to.

The power of medieval images and experiences to stir the creative imagination remains, however, as potent as ever. Paul Szarmach's study of W. H. Auden's *Anthem* moves from Auden weeping in his rooms after taking the (compulsory) Oxford Anglo-Saxon paper, to Auden deeply and increasingly stirred by the 'heroic' poetry of Old English and Old Norse, and the strong and mutually poetic relationship between the poet and his professor of Anglo-Saxon, J. R. R. Tolkien. Nils Holger Petersen's account of his own creative process gives us further a rare 'insider' view of the way medievalism works, the problems and the opportunities created by the interaction of the medieval (in genuine liturgical drama), the medievalist (in works of the present such as Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*), the professional (through awareness of anachronism) and the personal (in eventual composition).

Nor are medieval images less powerful in academia, as the section on 'Medievalism and the Academy' indicates with sometimes tragic force. Richard Utz's essay on the great and still academically dominant figure of Ernst Robert Curtius shows academic warfare operating in reality. A case can be made for saying that Curtius was, to use an old 'heroic' term, the 'bane' of his professorial colleague Hans H. Glunz. Utz demonstrates how Curtius's deep difference of opinion with Glunz over the direction of medieval studies led both to a scarifying and almost-200 page review of Glunz's book and to Curtius's own famous work

on *Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter*; while the review in its turn led to Glunz's academic downrating and, at several removes, to his conscription into the German army and his death in 1944 on the Eastern Front. Glunz's later rehabilitation reminds us that there is more than one way into (Curtius's spelling) *Mediaevalismus*. Chaucer studies, fortunately, have not yet reached this pitch of passion in our day. But Britton Harwood argues that they have perhaps turned in the other direction, with the most modern professional works on Chaucer quietly assimilating him to the hegemonic world-view of Anglo-American middle-class academicism, one might almost say of 'yuppiedom', a direction Harwood contrasts unfavourably with that of scholarship of the past. David Metzger's essay compares the medievalism of contemporary writers (W. D. Snodgrass) and theorists (Fredric Jameson) and reveals how in their work the opposition of literature/art and history has been redirected as the problem of identifying/constructing a modern evil. Metzger encourages us to see in Jameson's medievalist notions, especially in his appeal to allegory, the necessity of historical thought, that is a way of historicizing that does not explain away questions of art and history by transforming them into questions of Being/seeming. Expanding some of Leslie Workman's ideas, Metzger concludes that Jameson 'participates in medievalism that cannot distinguish itself from romanticism', a conflation which will lead the theorist to the medievalism-Orientalism of his later work. David Greetham sounds a warning in the last academic essay included here, which moves from such apparently naive projects as those of (in their original inception) the Early English Text Society and the *New English Dictionary*, seen once as the collection of pure data, to the reaction against 'clear-text' editing and the rush towards 'postmodernist' particularity and hypertextuality. The rush is well and good, Greetham argues, and one may add that medievalists have sometimes found it tactically advantageous to join in. But there may be a further romanticism lurking in a postmodernism which defines itself only against modernism, and fails to recognize that 'post-' implies 'pre-'. While moving from the printed book to the electronic Web, one should remember the earlier analogue of 'web' in the woven/textile 'text' of medieval manuscript culture.

Greetham's warning is a salutary one to the editors of a volume such as this, where the conventions of print dictate that contributions must be put in some sort of order, an order which then becomes at least bibliographically final. It is obvious, though, that the essays printed here could have been printed with equal cohesion in many different orders. Roger Simpson's account of St George has been included with Ulrich Müller's in section 2, seizing the connection through nationalist icons; yet it fits chronologically at least as well with the subjects of Felicia Bonaparte and William Calin. And David Metzger's discussion of radical evil in Snodgrass's The Fuehrer Bunker would have tied in with Gwendolyn Morgan's and William Paden's essays, but because it successfully theorizes medievalism we felt it should go into section 5. Other cross-connections will (the editors hope) make themselves apparent to all readers, in spite of the inevitable

editorial attempt to indicate one channel rather than another. Leslie Workman (whose intellectual odyssey is traced in the 'Interview' in our concluding section) established Studies in Medievalism in order to begin 'the inter-disciplinary study of medievalism as a comprehensive cultural phenomenon', and we hope that this volume will serve to emphasize both the word 'inter-disciplinary' and the word 'comprehensive'. It is true that these essays have 'drawn a shape' round medievalism, but it is not the only shape, and medievalism remains 'in the air'. We look forward to extensions and indeed contradictions of the positions taken here: Positions which (as William Calin's speech of thanks to Leslie Workman reminds us) might never have been taken at all without the lead given to academia by one who has remained institutionally, if not personally, outside it.

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MEDIEVALISM AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF AUTHORITY IN CONQUEST NARRATIVES

THERESA ANN SEARS

IN *AN INTRODUCTION TO METAPHYSICS*, the philosopher Martin Heidegger describes what he calls 'men of action' in such a way as to give an almost perfect definition of the Spanish *conquistadores:*

> Pre-eminent in the historical place, they become at the same time *apolis*, without city and place, lonely, strange (*unheimliche*), without issue amid beings as a whole, at the same time without statute and limit, without structure and order, because they themselves *as* creators must first create all this.[1]

What Heidegger's description captures is the psychological isolation of those engaged in the exploration of the 'new' in a society that placed no positive value on innovation. It should not surprise us, therefore, that the Spanish exploration and conquest of the New World was an enterprise fraught with anxiety. This insecurity is heightened by the peculiar history of Spain itself, as 'not a territory, but a *project* which constantly traveled, was constantly displaced'.[2] As Spain begins, in the early modern period, to conceive of itself as an identifiable entity, in other words, it seeks to situate itself in both time and place. The conquest and exploration of the New World granted to Spain the extraordinary opportunity to *choose* it own temporal and spatial definition, which it would do by looking not forward, to imagine something as new as the world its 'men of action' had inadvertently 'found', but by looking to the past, in search of its own 'most glorious memories [which] were of feudal conquest and crusading zeal'.[3]

If, as Helgerson argues, 'Every discourse of nationhood is also a discourse of self',[4] then we can trace some of the problems created by Spain's search for its own identity in the explorers who carried it out.

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[1] *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. by R. Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), pp. 152–53.

[2] Julián Marías, *Understanding Spain,* trans. by Frances M. López-Morillas (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), p. 128.

[3] Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 182.

[4] Helgerson, p. 294.

Columbus, for example, has few equals for sheer pig-headed stubborness, but he is not a confident traveler. No wonder: a Genoese sailing under Spanish colours, Columbus has only the Crown's reluctant and scant support for a risky endeavour which he devoutly prays will reward him extravagantly with power, riches, and glory, although the monarchs' grandiose but ultimately vague promises to that effect will prove impossible to enforce. Columbus also must depend on ships not made for transoceanic navigation, as well as a crew of wily, independent, and unwilling sailor-businessmen who will doubt him, defy him, and even abandon him at various points in the journey.

All of this is a far cry from what readers find in other well-known travelers' tales. In one of Columbus's Ur-texts, Marco Polo's thirteenth-century *Travels*,[5] the Polos *père et fils* (not to mention *oncle*) seem confident and cheerful. They have reason: having underwritten their own journey, they have every expectation of turning a handsome profit; and most importantly, they have made the trip before. Unlike Columbus, the Polos have actually *met* the Great Khan, and they know where to find him. In a very different voyage, but with a similar confidence, Lewis and Clark[6] possess the whole-hearted support of their sponsor, Thomas Jefferson; indeed, he has hand-picked them for the adventure. Although they must cope with injuries, illness, Indians, bad weather, worse terrain, a boat described only half jokingly as possessed by an 'evil genii', and an entire host of troublesome wildlife, including what Lewis insists on calling 'gentlemen bears', they do not have to convince either themselves or their reader that theirs is a valid project (albeit that the United States Congress was none too sure about the latter point), or that their recounting of its events is accurate. The contrast in tone between the narratives of the Spanish conquerors and those of the travelers who both preceded and followed them makes it clear that

> written voyages tell not only what happened when some captain and crew sailed to some distant land. They also tell what world those happenings require and suppose: what structures of identity, what division of power, what representational practices [...].[7]

Perhaps only Sir Walter Raleagh shares with the Spanish *conquistadores* that anxiety that preys on the sixteenth and

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[5] *The Travels of Marco Polo*, trans. by Ronald Latham (London: Penguin, 1958).

[6] *The Journals of Lewis and Clark*, ed. by Bernard De Voto (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1953).

[7] Helgerson, p. 191.

seventeenth-century explorer who serves a jealous and capricious imperial power to whom he has promised, it turns out, more than he can deliver.

In a broader context, we might argue that anxiety is the hallmark of Renaissance and Baroque culture in Spain, a culture often seen, as Paul Julian Smith reminds us, as 'excessively extravagant and immoderate'.[8] It sees itself always on the defensive. First, it fights a bitter, seven centuries-long battle agains the occupying Moors, which culminates in an extraordinary attempt to cast forth the invading culture and all of its attendants. Scarcely has that initiative ended than Spain undertakes two others: one, in the Old World, against the religious reforms sweeping the rest of Europe and in defense of medieval orthodox Christianity; and the other, in the New World, to implant a revived, pure Spanish, medieval Christian culture that it believes it has so vigourously defended for so many years. In doing so, however, Spain imprisons itself within a circle of enemies that its own political rhetoric has called forth. The Inquisition, after all, is a reflex of fear, not confidence. One historical lesson that each period must learn for itself is the psychic damage inflicted upon a dominant culture by its own attempts to eliminate difference: every thought becomes a threat, every opinion a dangerous secret. The result is a kind of official paranoia, along with the general sense that, as Avalle-Arce describes it, 'no se sentía, en sus momentos reflexivos, *a la altura de las circunstancias*' (one does not feel, in his moments of reflection, *in control of circumstances*).[9] Oliveira Martins puts it more bluntly: 'The fruits of our achievement turned against us'.[10]

The conquest of the New World, in this setting, makes Spain 'a nation that was caught up unexpectedly into a global role for which it was never adequately prepared',[11] at the same time in which it suffers a 'deep underlying disagreement over national identity itself'.[12] From these culturally traumatic experiences emerges a crisis of authority: Whom do we believe, and what justifies that belief? For the conqueror-chroniclers of the New World exploration, it becomes a narrative or

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[8] *Writing in the Margin; Spanish Literature of the Golden Age* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), p. 20.

[9] Juan Bautista Avalle-Arce, 'Características generales del Renacimiento literario', *Historia de la literatura española. Tomo II: Renacimiento y Barroco*, ed. by José María Diez Borque (Madrid: Taurus, 1980), pp. 13–48 (p. 24).

[10] J. P. de Oliveira Martins, *A History of Iberian Civilization*, trans. by Aubrey F. G. Bell (New York: Cooper Square, 1969), p. 225.

[11] Henry Kamen, *Spain 1469–1714: A Society in Conflict* (New York: Longman, 1983), p. xiv.

[12] J. H. Elliot, *Spain and its World 1500–1700: Selected Essays* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 261.

rhetorical problem: How to tell an unprecedented story in such a way as to convince the readers (often those whose reaction will determine the fate not only of the enterprise, but of the author as well) that the events are true, and that this particular version is accurate. A fundamental inability to appreciate the new infinitely complicates the problem. Columbus and those who followed him did not write 'in order to make sense of a new world',[13] but in order to fit what they observed into the comprehensive and comprehensible context of the old world,[14] and the idealisation of the Middle Ages that characterized it.

Antiquity and the Middle Ages passed down to the New World chroniclers three ways of granting authority to a narrative or record of events: 1) the claim to be an eyewitness, what Pagden in *European Encounters with the New World*, calls (after the ancients) 'autopsy': 'It is the appeal to the authority of the eye witness, to the privileged understanding which those present at an event have over all those who have only read or been told about it';[15] 2) the appeal to other texts granted the status of 'authorities'; and 3) the argument implicit in the employment of recognized narrative genres. Each of these strategies has its limitations. The eyewitness claim, based on the belief, as Greenblatt explains, that 'To see is to secure the truth of what might otherwise be deemed incredible',[16] founders on the rock of mediation: the description of what one sees is inevitably and necessarily an interpretation, and results in Pagden's 'principle of attachment', where 'what is familiar [...] is employed to "attach" one unfamiliar action to another familiar one', often ignoring 'the stark incommensurability of the two'.[17] As Certeau remarks concerning the complex resonance for Europeans of the New World natives' nakedness, 'the text will be forever menaced by the exegete, who only knows how to identify a body and perceive breeches'.[18] The authoritative value of previous

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[13] Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 4.

[14] Almost all contemporary historians and critics make this point. In addition to any of Anthony Pagden's recent works, as well as Kamen and Elliott, see also Djelal Kadir, *Columbus and the Ends of the Earth: Europe's Prophetic Rhetoric as Conquering Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); and William D. and Carla Rahn Phillips, *The Worlds of Christopher Columbus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[15] New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993, p. 51.

[16] Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 122.

[17] *European Encounters with the New World*, p. 21.

[18] Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 79.

texts becomes less reliable when the texts themselves relate fantastic or dubious events. Reading Sir John Mandeville and Marco Polo, as Columbus did, as well as both prior and future travel writers, would lead us to wonder that any humans still people the earth, endangered as they are on all continents and in all climes by cannibals and dog-faced castrators. Those same cannibals and their various cousins, such as Amazons, also expose the limitations of recognizable generic authority: medieval romances and folktales, it turns out, do not make appropriate models for narratives of exploration, and in fact conflict with the claim of eyewitness observation, for although such creatures appear in many types of narrative, no one has ever actually seen one, in spite of the fact that many people claim to know someone who has.

When we begin to read Columbus's *Diary of the First Voyage*,[19] then, we are struck immediately by his attempts to cope with the anxiety about authority, and the extent to which it makes his journey less a matter of physical movement than of discursive movement.[20] Because neither he nor his intended readers (King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella) know how to value the unprecedented, and the other sailors are utterly terrified of it, Columbus grounds his story in the familiar. His prologue situates the journey historically in, first, the context of the triumphant conquest of Granada that ends the *reconquista*; second, in the tradition of travel to the Orient and contact with the Khans of Mongolia and China (albeit that his knowledge of events in the East is several centuries out of date); and third, in his monarchs' own supposed orders.[21] He emphasizes, in particular, that this voyage and the man who makes it have royal authorisation. The King and Queen 'pensaron de enbiarme a mí, Cristóbal Colón' (thought to send me, Christopher Columbus),[22] and we note the concatenation of personal references in the form of two first-person pronouns and his own name. Even the one innovation with which

[19] In *Textos y documentos completos*, ed. by Consuelo Varela (Madrid: Alianza, 1989). All translations are my own.

[20] Greenblatt, p. 54.

[21] Columbus dates the journey to 'este presente año de 1492, después de Vuestras Altezas aver dado fin a la guerra de los moros, que reinava en Europa, y aver acabado la guerra en la muy grande ciudad de Granada' (this present year of 1492, after Your Highnesses having brought the war with the Moors, who reined in Europe, to an end, and having ended the war in the very great city of Granada). He then states that the monarchs have heard his information about 'las tierras de India y de un Príncipe que es llamado Gran Can' (the lands of India and of a Prince who is called the Great Khan), who 'avía[] enbiado a Roma a pedir doctores en nuestra sancta fe porque le enseñasen en ella' (had sent to Rome to request men learned in our holy faith to teach him about it) (*Diary*, p. 15).

[22] *Diary*, p. 15.

legend credits Columbus – the attempt to reach the east by traveling to the west – he assigns to the royal pair, writing that they 'ordenaron que yo no fuese por tierra al Oriente, por donde se costumbra de andar, salvo por el camino de Occidente, por donde hasta oy no sabemos que aya passado nadie' (ordered that I not go by land to the East, which is the usual way to go, but by way of the West, where until now we know of none who has passed that way).[23] Whatever happens, Columbus seems to say, this new method of travel, about which we know nothing 'by certain faith', was *not* my own idea! These rhetorical strategies ground the narrative that follows in a planned revivification of the past and make of 'the discourse of nationhood [...] a discourse of unity and uniformity'.[24]

Columbus's prologue makes every effort to establish his narrative firmly within what Greenblatt calls 'the stories that a culture tells itself, its conceptions of personal boundary and liability, its whole collective system of rules',[25] and the rest of the diary documents his struggle to keep it there. Even the little ritual of taking possession of each island upon which he lands harks back to an image sketched in the prologue.

While historians and critics have often been baffled by these ceremonies, since they do not conform to Columbus's previous experiences as a merchant sailor, nor do they appear in the other travel narratives that Columbus seems to have read, their symbolic value recalls the vision of triumph that Columbus describes in the prologue:

> por fuerça de armas vide poner las vanderas reales de Vuestras Altezas en las torres de la Alfambra [...] y vide salir al rey moro a las puertas de la ciudad, y besar las reales manos de Vuestras Altezas y del Príncipe mi Señor.
>
> [by the force of arms I saw your Royal Highnesses' banners placed on the towers of the Alhambra [...] and I saw the Moorish king leave by the city gates and kiss the royal hands of Your Highnesses and of my lord the Prince.][26]

Thus, Columbus's tendency to express 'authoritative certainty in the face of spectacular ignorance'[27] becomes a perfectly logical strategy: people only believe (and can tell) a story that they already know, especially when it is a story as over-valued as is the Reconquest in Spain. The technique also has generic consequences that fortify the

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[23] *Diary*, p. 16.
[24] Helgerson, p. 295.
[25] Greenblatt, p. 64.
[26] *Diary*, p. 15.
[27] Greenblatt, p. 90.

story's ties to the past. Although Columbus is nearly obsessed with finding gold, his prologue casts the voyage as epic, with all of the epic's 'resistance to social change, its attempt to figure the present as a vision of the mythic past',[28] and its rejection of the merchant's 'relatively uncomplicated desire for profit', in favor of 'the impulse of glory'.[29]

But there is more than one story to tell, and Columbus and those who come after him fight a constant discursive battle to have *their* stories accepted as the only authoritative ones. Each, therefore, casts himself as a true hero, and assigns to those who may disagree the role of treacherous, self-serving villains, the sort of characters who always cause misfortune to the hero in medieval epic and romance. In Columbus's diary, Martín Alonso Pinzón plays that role. Although at first he seems to Columbus a 'persona esforçada y de buen ingenio' (a valient and intelligent person),[30] Martín Alonso soon begins to demonstrate a distressing independence. On 18 September, he races ahead, in spite of Columbus's orders to the contrary, in an obvious bid to be the first to come to land.[31] On the 25th, Alonso claims to see land, but it never materialises.[32] By 6 October, he and Columbus disagree as to how to proceed.[33] All of this prepares for 21 November, when Martín Alonso takes the Pinta and sets off on his own:

> Este día se apartó Martín Alonso Pinçón con la caravela Pinta, sin obediencia y voluntad del Almirante, por cudiçia, diz que pensando que un indio que el Almirante avía mandado poner en aquella caravela le avía de dar mucho oro. Y así se fue sin esperar, sin causa del mal tiempo, sino porque quiso.
>
> [Today Martín Alonso Pinzón left with the caravelle the Pinta, without obedience and the will of the Admiral, for greed, it is said, believing that an Indian that the Admiral commanded be placed in that caravelle was going to give him a great deal of gold. And so he left without waiting, not because of bad weather, but because he wanted to.][34]

'Not because of bad weather, but only because he wanted to': treachery, pure and simple, and all for the sake of greed. Martín Alonso is scorned throughout the rest of the diary. When the Pinta has

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[28] Helgerson, p. 174.
[29] Helgerson, p. 172.
[30] *Diary*, p. 18.
[31] *Diary*, p. 22.
[32] *Diary*, p. 24.
[33] *Diary*, p. 27.
[34] *Diary*, p. 61.

difficulties during the return voyage, it is because Alonso chose not to 'proveerse de un buen mastel en las Indias' (provide himself with a good mast in the Indies), thinking instead about 'hinchar el navío de oro' (swelling the ship with gold).[35] Thus, when Alonso and the Pinta disappear during a storm, Columbus worries about his own 'deseo grande que tenía de llevar estas nuevas tan grandes y mostrar que *avía salido verdadero* en lo que avía dicho y proferídose a descubrir' (great desire that he had of carrying such great news and that what I had said and promised to discover *had come true*).[36] He concerns himself because of 'los trabajos que [tenía] con los marineros y gente que llevaba, los cuales todos a una boz estaban determinados de se bolver y alçaronse contra él, haziendo protestaçiones' (the difficulties that he had had with the sailors and people they brought, who all together were determined to turn around and arose against him, protesting).[37] To assure himself that *his* story – the 'true' one – will reach Spain, Columbus writes it down and tosses it overboard in a cask. It never reaches Spain, but its author does, spitefully pleased to give the lie to all the members of the court who thought his adventure was a joke.

If Columbus, who possessed his king's authorization, if not his wholehearted enthusiasm, suffered from such anxiety for authority, how much more so should Cortés, whose legendary achievements could be seen as tainted by 'the stigma of treachery and rebellion'.[38] In fact, Cortés's story presents us with, as it were, Martín Alonso Pinzón's version of events, in which the rebel/traitor makes a bid to speak in his own voice. Cortés's *Cartas de relación*[39] serve as 'at one level, an exercise in legitimation'[40] that will gain for his actions, after the fact, royal authority, as well as endorse the authority that he has seized for himself. Both Elliott and Pagden have exposed the ways that Cortés shapes his narrative, using his 'masterly capacity for suppression of evidence and ingenious distortion',[41] in Elliott's words, to establish a direct, discursive connection to the King, completely by-

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[35] *Diary*, p. 121.

[36] *Diary*, p. 127, emphasis added.

[37] *Diary*, p. 138.

[38] J. H. Elliott, 'Introduction', *Hernán Cortés: Letters from Mexico*, trans. and ed. by Anthony Pagden (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. xi–xxxvii (p. xv). In fact, as Elliott notes, 'From the moment of his hasty departure from Santiago, in Cuba, he found himself in a highly equivocal position, both in relation to his immediate superiors and to the Spanish crown.' (p. xii).

[39] *Cartas de relación de la conquista de México* (Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1982). Translations are my own.

[40] Anthony Pagden, 'Translator's Introduction', *Hernán Cortés: Letters from Mexico* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. xxxviii–lx (p. xxxviii).

[41] Elliott, 'Introduction', p. xx.

passing those intermediate royal authorities that he consistently portrays 'as self-interested officials, motivated by greed and ambition'.[42] Although the reasoning behind Cortés's narrative creates a legal base for his actions, it does not wholly explain the narrative quality of his story, in which, as a form of 'national self-writing, self-alienation and self-aggrandisement are one'.[43]

Inga Clendinnen has argued that, far more interesting than Cortés's 'conscious manipulation' is the effect that 'the subtle, insidious human desire to craft a dramatically satisfying and coherent story out of fragmentary and ambiguous experience'[44] produces. Beyond even that, Cortés's story compels our interest for the ways in which such narrative shaping and drive fail. Although Cortés presents himself heroically, as the protagonist of a medieval romance (an aspect that will become even more pronounced in Castillo's rendering of the events), 'intent on projecting a self-image of formidable control of self and circumstance'[45] that would justify the authority that he claims, the story he tells reveals just the opposite. Such self-appointed, catch-as-catch-can conquering is very much a high wire act without a net. Natives promise to return and flee instead. Just when it appears that Cortés has the natives under control, political fissures break open among the Spaniards. When he turns to resolve that situation, someone who does not understand the implicit script for dealing with the Mexica does something rash, such as attack celebrants at a festival, and Cortés's elaborate, fragile arrangements are abruptly and fatally shattered.

The various narrative methods that Cortés employs to shore up the authority of his narrative never quite suffice to allay his anxiety. The trumped-up 'regimento de la Rica Villa de la Veracruz' (itself a fiction that allows Cortés to depict himself as a rebel by proclamation) advances the claim that

> las relaciones que hasta ahora a vuestras majestades desta tierra se han hecho, así de la manera y riquezas della como de la forma en que fue descubierta, y otras cosas que della se han dicho, no son ni han podido ser ciertas, porque nadie hasta ahora las ha sabido, como será ésta que nosotros a vuestras reales altezas enviamos.
>
> [the narratives that up to now have been presented to your majesties about this land, and about the customs and riches of it, as well as about the way

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[42] Elliot, p. xviii.

[43] Helgerson, p. 294.

[44] '"Fierce and Unnatural Cruelty": Cortés and the Conquest of Mexico', *Representations*, 33 (1991), 65–100 (p. 67).

[45] Clendinnen, '"Fierce and Unnatural Cruelty"', p. 75.

> it was discovered, and other things that have been said about it, are not and have not been able to be true, because no one until now has known them, as this [letter] that we send to your royal highnesses will be true.][46]

The problem, however, is that Cortés and his men are not the only eyewitnesses here, which exposes the limitations of autopsy in establishing authority. Unlike later eyewitness authors of conquest histories, such as Bartolomé de las Casas and Bernal Díaz del Castillo, Cortés does not write to correct views of court historians who have never visited the New World. Those who contest his version (and they begin to arrive with ever greater frequency as time goes on) are also eyewitnesses, albeit with a different perspective. In the event of competing eyewitness accounts, Cortés finds himself helpless to do anything but solicit more. At the end of the second letter, he insists 'yo he escrito a vuestra majestad, aunque mal dicho, la verdad de todo lo sucedido en estas partes' (I have written to your majesty, albeit inelegantly, the truth of everything that occurred here). He nevertheless requests that the King 'mande enviar una persona de confianza que haga inquisición y pesquisa de todo e informe a vuestra sacra majestad dello' (order a reliable person sent to interrogate and investigate everything and to inform your sacred majesty about it).[47] He believes that this examination will prove that the King 'can give complete credit to what I write', but the request itself, as well as his anxious assurances, suggest that others believe differently, and that Cortés himself is aware of it.

In effect, Spain's anxiety for authority exists precisely because of its relationship to a whole series of 'others', of which the New World peoples represent only the most extreme examples. Moors, Jews, Protestants, Italians, Dutch, English: in its medievalist world view, Spain casts all of them as despised 'other': 'They are the people who live outside of all just order, apart from settled human community and hence from the very condition of the virtuous life'.[48] The Spanish conquerors' difficulties in conferring authority on their narratives stems in part from the fact that their 'discourse about the other is a means of constructing a discourse authorised by the other'.[49] This strategy, as Certeau notes, always depends on 'fabrication', and the gaps in the process of fabricating truth trigger the characteristic anxious search for authority. When the narrative strategy breaks down, it does so dramatically and violently. Columbus's timid islanders begin

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[46] *Cartas de relación*, p. 13.
[47] *Cartas de relación*, p. 110.
[48] Greenblatt, p. 68.
[49] Certeau, p. 50.

meeting the visitors with spears and arrows instead of balls of thread and yucca. Cortés must face

> the surreal devastation of the city that had been the glittering prize and magnificent justification for his insubordination [...] now reduced by perverse, obdurate resistance to befouled rubble, its once magnificent lords, its whole splendid hierarchy, to undifferentiated human wreckage.[50]

In her book on the Aztecs, Clendinnen laments the lack of materials left after the massive destruction that encapsulated the conquest of the New World, and cautions the historian who attempts to tell the story in the face of such lack: 'Questing for a past and unfamiliar sensibility opens the immediate temptation to tame shadowy and shifting forms to accomodatingly familiar shapes'.[51] For the Spanish New World conquerors, it was not a temptation to resist, but rather a strategy to embrace, as it offered them the comfort of placing their actions in an idealized medieval context, in spite of its fatal consequences. It is, therefore, ironically appropriate that in other explorers' accounts, the Spaniards themselves appear as 'other'. Sir Walter Raleagh declares:

> it shall be my lot to prosecute the same, I shall willingly spend my life therein, and if any else shall be enabled thereunto, and conquer the same, I assure him thus much, he shall perform more than was ever done in *Mexico* by *Cortez*, or in *Peru* by *Pizarro* [...] and whatsoever Prince shall possess it, that Prince shall be Lord of more gold, and of a more beautiful Empire, and of more cities and people, than either the King of Spain, or the great Turk.[52]

A conqueror of such cruelty that natives make common cause even with cannibals to resist them, the Spanish in Raleagh's text become legend, authority, and fabulous point of comparison to support his own conquest fabrication: the gold-dripping interior of South America, which like the people that 'have their eyes in their shoulders, and their mouths in the middle of their breasts', Raleagh has never seen. He is nevertheless willing to believe that they exist, for 'I am resolved that so many people did not all combine, or forethink to make the report',[53] yet another way to allay the anxiety for authority.

In this way, Raleagh's narrative serves to confirm the medievalist construct of the Spanish conquerors: by inscribing them into his own

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[50] Clendinnen, '"Fierce and Unnatural Cruelty"', p. 92.

[51] *Aztecs: An Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 11.

[52] Sir Walter Raleagh, *Selected Writings*, ed. by Gerald Hammond (London: Penguin, 1984), p. 85.

[53] Raleagh, p. 111.

version of Europe's destiny outside of its continent, he makes them more than their own fantasy. Helgerson has argued that 'The kingdom/nation authorizes—indeed, authors—the text/form. And the reverse is also true. The text/form authorizes and authors the kingdom/nation'.[54] In the Spanish conquest narratives, Spain creates and recreates its own medievalist identity.

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[54] Helgerson, p. 12.

HUMANIST ALLUSIONS AND MEDIEVAL THEMES: THE 'RECEYVING' OF QUEEN ANNE, LONDON 1533

RICHARD H. OSBERG

AT THE END OF his Editorial in Volume VII of Studies in Medievalism, Leslie J. Workman, one of the founders and certainly the patron saint of medievalism, offers an elegant new paradigm for the field: 'Medievalism and medieval studies might well be defined as the Middle Ages in the contemplation of contemporary society',[1] a reflection that invites consideration of medievalism as limited neither to the reception or re-invention of the Middle Ages associated with the 'Victorian fantasy' of the medieval revival nor to the Middle Ages of twentieth-century pop culture, but as embracing also the contemporary study of Western culture's continuous return to the medieval past noted by Umberto Eco: the 'modern ages', he writes, 'have revisited the Middle Ages from the moment when, according to historical handbooks, they came to an end'.[2] In England, that moment may well be marked, at least in terms of civic pageantry, by the 1533 entry staged for Queen Anne Boleyn, when, as Sydney Anglo observes, 'two classical scholars devised both pageants and speeches so that for the first time England witnessed a pageant series which seemed truly classical'.[3] Despite that humanist classicism, however, I will argue that the third pageant (Anne Boleyn's badge and St. Anne), the eighth (the veni amica coronaberis pageant) and the ninth (the tower of the cardinal virtues) appropriate a medieval pageant theme – the Queen as the virga Jesse, her child as the Christ-like prince – reinventing medieval Marian iconography as Protestant heraldic authority in an attempt to lend legitimacy to Henry's breach with the papacy[4]

London civic shows have earlier been the subject of essays in medievalism; Martin W. Walsh, for instance, demonstrates how the

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[1] Leslie J. Workman, 'Editorial I', *Studies in Medievalism*, 7 (1996), 1–2.

[2] Umberto Eco, 'Dreaming of the Middle Ages' in *Travels in Hyper Reality*, trans. by William Weaver (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), p. 65.

[3] Sydney Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry and Early Tudor Policy* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), p. 284.

[4] The pageant sequence was, as Arber notes 'the official recognition of the Revolt from the Papacy; and all who took a prominent part in it favoured the new Faith'. Edward Arber, *An English Garner*, 8 vols. (Westminster: Constable, 1895), II, 41.

medieval figure of St. Martin of Tours occupies a central role in the Lord Mayor's Show of 1702.[5] Nonetheless, the classicizing references, the humanist speeches, and the design by Holbein seem at first glance to make 'The Receyving' of Queen Anne an unlikely place to discover a return to the themes and imagery of the medieval pageant tradition. Classical allusions appear at every turn. At the corner of Gracechurch street, for instance, the Queen found the pageant organized by the merchants of the steelyard – Mt Parnassus and the fountain of Helicon where were seated Apollo and the nine muses (a scene perhaps designed by Hans Holbein[6]). At the conduit in Cornhill, Aglaia, Thaleia, and Euphrosyne, the Three Graces, came forward in turn to promise Anne honour, joy, and dignity, and at the Great Conduit, Virgilian assurances of the return of The Golden Age were offered. The seventh pageant, the Judgment of Paris, featured Juno, Pallas, Venus, Mercury and Paris. Anne was deemed most worthy of the victory, of course, but the golden apple was a prize too insignificant for one who would bear the Imperial Crown.[7] There are references to Ceres, Cleopatra, Cybele, Gracchus and Cornelia, Nestor, Portia and Brutus, Venus in her sea-shell, the roses of Paestum – the overall impression of the pageant sequence is one of learned literary allusion, laboured Latinity, and the regnant new humanism.

In the context of that classical elaboration, the third pageant of Anne Boleyn's badge and St. Anne strikes an oddly discordant note. The pageant contained a mechanical representation of Anne Boleyn's badge, beneath which were stationed St. Anne and her daughters, the Virgin Mary, Mary Salome and Mary Cleophe. Ives observes that 'the pageant combined – or rather confused – two themes. The first was an identification of the hoped-for fecundity of Anne Boleyn with the maternal success of the legendary St. Anne [...]. The second theme exploited Anne Boleyn's badge, the crowned falcon'.[8] Even the lineage of St. Anne, the mother of the Blessed Virgin Mary and two other Marys (who are perhaps the same person), is something of a muddle, cobbled together as it is from a number of biblical sources. As Anglo observes of the three Marys who are Anne's offspring, 'the whole point of this pageant, the fruitful line of St. Anne, seems to

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[5] Martin W. Walsh, 'St. Martin in the City: The Lord Mayor's Show of 1702', *Studies in Medievalism*, 4 (1992), 70–78.

[6] Arthur B. Chamberlain, *Hans Holbein the Younger*, 2 vols. (London: Allen, 1913), II, 30–33.

[7] Robert Withington, *English Pageantry: An Historical Outline*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918–26; vol. I repr. by Arno Press, 1980), I, 182–83.

[8] E. W. Ives, *Anne Boleyn* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), p. 277.

depend upon giving separate personalities to identical or ambiguous characters'.[9]

Nonetheless, the pageant's dual themes are connected by an important medieval iconographic tradition. Anne's badge contained heraldic elements not heretofore brought together in royal symbolism.[10] Particularly germane are the root, stalk, and rose of the device set on the mount, an iconography which, connected with the lineage of the Blessed Virgin, calls to mind the root that is Jesse (the *radix Jesse*), the stalk that is Mary (the *virga*), and the flower that is Christ (the *flos*). Leo Spitzer, for instance, has shown how this iconography lies behind the paired images of the 'rose-tree-that-is-Mary' and the 'flower-that-is-Christ' in Middle English lyrics.[11] By linking the lineage of Christ through Mary back to Anne with the iconography of root, stalk, and flower, the pageant authors recuperate a symbolism that invests Anne's image as Queen with the sacred identity of the *sponsa*. The covert messianism coupling Queen Anne with Mary and Queen Anne's wished for male offspring with the Christ-like prince, who, blessed with the cardinal virtues, will establish the peaceable kingdom is further elaborated by the pageant at St. Paul's gate. Here beneath an empty throne (perhaps the *Sedes Sapientiae*[12]), three ladies, possibly representing the Sibyls of antiquity who prophesied the advent of Christ,[13] held placards, the central one reading *veni amica coronaberis*, a direct appropriation of the Marian hymn, *veni coronaberis*.[14] Beneath the pageant was a Latin scroll reading 'Queen Anne, when thou shalt bear a new son of the King's blood, there shall be a golden world unto thy people'.[15] The Latin motto for this pageant, reported by Hall, was 'Regina Anna prospere! procede! et regna!' (Queen Anne prosper, go forward, and reign!), a

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[9] Sydney Anglo, *Spectacle*, pp. 253–54.

[10] Hugh Stanford London, *Royal Beasts*, with drawings by Harold B. Pereira (East Knoyle, Wilts.: The Heraldry Society, 1956), pp. 59–61.

[11] Leo Spitzer, '"Explication de Texte" Applied to Three Great Middle English Poems', *Archivum Linquisticum*, 3 (1961), 1–22; 137–65.

[12] The enthroned Mary was often interpreted as the *Sedes Sapientiae*. See Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Medieval Art*, trans. by Alan J. P. Crick (London: Warburg Institute, 1939; repr. Toronto: Medieval Academy Reprints for Teaching, 1989), pp. 41–42. n. 5.

[13] Ives, p. 284.

[14] There may also be here a suggestion of the often-performed 'Coronation of the Virgin Play', also connected with royal entries; in the 1486 entry for Henry VII at York, for instance, 'Our Lady's Ascension' was played at Stonegate. See Margaret Dorrell, 'The Mayor of York and the Coronation Pageant', *Leeds Studies in English Drama*, 5 (1971), 35–45 (39).

[15] Ives, p. 284.

motto borrowed from the Nature, Grace, and Fortune pageant on London Bridge in the 1432 entry for Henry VI: 'Intende, prospere, procede et regna',[16] a pageant sequence based on the Rod of Jesse passage in Isaiah 11 1–3.[17] The ninth pageant, a tower with maidens representing the four cardinal virtues stationed in its turrets, is similarly a throwback to early medieval pageant tradition – a tower with four virgins had been erected by the Goldsmiths for Richard II's coronation in 1377; from it, an angel descended, offering a golden crown[18] – a pageant device also frequently associated with the theme of the Christ-like prince.

The medieval antecedents of this theme are delineated in the 1456 pageant series arranged to greet Margaret and Prince Edward at Coventry:

> Memorandum that the demene & rule that was made & shewed vnto oure Souerayn lady the quene at Couentre was thus as it foloweth yn Wrytyng that is for to sey furst at Bablake there was made a Iesse ouer the yate right well and there were shewed too speches, as foloweth
>
> ysay Princes most excellent born of blode riall
> Chosen quene of this region conforte to all hus
> Wordes to your magnificens woll I say thus
> I ysay replete with þe spirite propheticall
> like as mankynde was gladdid by the birght of Ihesus
> So shall þis empyre ioy the birthe of your bodye
> The knyghtly curage of prince Edward all men shal ioy to se
> Ieremy Emprice quene princes excellent in on person all iij
> I Ieromy þe prophete trew þeis wordes of you wyll say
> this reme shall ioye þe blyssyd tyme of your natiuyte
> the mellyflue mekenes of your person shall put all wo away
> vn to the rote of Iesse rote likkyn you well I may
> the fragrante floure sprongon of you shall so encrece & sprede
> that alle the world yn ich party shall cherisshe hym love & drede.[19]

Here, root and flower are explicitly linked to the *radix Jesse* erected over the gate, and that imagery is explicitly linked to 'þe blyssyd tyme

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[16] Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, *Chronicles of London* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1905), p. 102.

[17] Richard Osberg, 'The Jesse Tree in the 1432 London Entry of Henry VI: Messianic Kingship and the Rule of Justice', *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 2 (1986), 213–32.

[18] Richard Osberg, 'The Goldsmiths' "Chastell" of 1377', *Theatre Survey: The American Journal of Theatre History*, 27 (1986), 1–15.

[19] *Coventry: Records of Early English Drama*, ed. by R. W. Ingram (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1981), pp. 29–30.

of your natiuyte', celebrating Margaret's fruitfulness as the later pageants celebrate Anne's hoped-for fecundity. Interestingly, the other non-classical pageant in 'The Receyving', that of the tower of the four virtues, is one also associated with the Jesse theme in medieval pageantry. In the 1456 entry of Queen Margaret and Edward, for instance, in which Margaret is likened to 'the rote of Iesse rote', the third pageant, at the conduit in Smythford street, presents the ladies Temperaunce, Rightwesness, Strength, and Prudence, who promise Margaret and Edward that 'We shall endowe both you & hym clerely to vnderstonde / We shall preserue you personally & neuer fro you disseuer'.[20]

The desire for a male heir is never far below the surface in any of the pageants designed for Anne Boleyn in 1533, but the linking of Queen Anne with Mary and Anne's heir with the Christ-like prince, suggested by the root, stalk, and flower as well as the presence of the Virgin Mary, was contested by at least one scribe, whose resistance to the appropriation of the root and stalk for heraldic purposes colours the otherwise standard account in BL MS Harley 41. In his description of this pageant, the scribe of BL MS Harley 41 suppresses the root and stalk, mentioning rather a golden rose, and simultaneously puts under erasure St. Anne's wishes for procreation and the implied similarities between her offspring, the Marys, and Queen Anne's child.

Information concerning the London pageants organized to greet Queen Anne in 1533 has been preserved in nearly overwhelming abundance, unhappily so, some may think, for the reputations of Nicholas Udall and the great antiquary John Leland, whose execrable 'Songes and Ditties' both in English and Latin, survive in what was perhaps intended as a presentation copy to Anne herself (BL MS Royal 18 A lxiv, fols. 1–16). There is as well an Egerton manuscript of some 20 leaves on which, in meticulous detail, are sketched the order of horse and litter attending the Queen through London and the seating plan for the dinner following the coronation, including notice of the King's hidden observation post (BL MS Egerton 985). Orders from the Duke of Northumberland (who was charged, apparently, with communicating the King's wishes to the city [BL MS Egerton 985, fols. 58–9]) and pleas from the city to the King for aid with manpower and money are all extant (BL MS Egerton 2623, fol. 5), as are Cromwell's 'Memorandum of Things to be Done and Provided for the Coronation of Queen Anne', and a 'Memorandum Touching the Order in Procedying from the Tower to Westmynster', before the Coronation (both in BL MS Additional 6113 and elsewhere).

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[20] Ingram, p. 32.

It is probably inevitable, given the volume of material which has been preserved, that discrepancies in details should occur, and it is undoubtedly unadvised to make too much of them. Nevertheless, BL MS Harley 41 and its copy, College of Arms MS I. 18. fols. 36–49, provide a variation on the standard accounts of the pageant of Anne Boleyn's badge that suggests, if not active hostility to, at least a degree of discomfort with the symbolism of the pageant as described in the 'official account' issued under the King's impress. This discrepancy allows us to see how official accounts of civic pageantry in the late Tudor period were powerful instruments in shaping political symbols and ideology, underscoring an important medieval pageant theme even while apparently embracing the new Tudor humanism.

The two most significant accounts of the pageantry are the pamphlet issued by Wynkyn de Worde under the King's impress, 'The noble tryumphaunt coronacyon of queen Anne / wyfe vnto the moost noble kynge Henry the viij.' in 1533[21] and the related account of Hall, published in 1548 in *Hall's Chronicle*.[22] Between these two fall a number of similar manuscripts, particularly BL MS Egerton 985 and BL MS Add. 6113, which I will refer to collectively as 'The Receyving, Conveying & Coronacion', giving roughly the same text as Hall, and perhaps representing his sources. These manuscripts also contain related information, Cromwell's 'Memorandum' and the 'Order of Procedying', and share similarities of phrasing that make it fairly certain that Wynkyn de Worde's 'The noble tryumphaunt coronacyon' is the original if remote source.

As do BL MS Egerton 985 and BL MS Add. 6113, BL MS Harley 41 contains the account of the river procession, the London pageants, the procession to Westminster, the coronation, the dinner following, and the various memoranda. In two places, however, the scribe of BL MS Harley 41 departs in significant ways from 'The Receyving', and it is these two alterations that I wish to consider.

Following the decidedly humanist pageant of Apollo and the nine muses at Gracechurch sponsored by the merchants of the steelyard, the Queen processed to Leadenhall, where she was greeted by a pageant organized by the merchants of the staple. The earliest and fullest account of this pageant is from Wynkyn de Worde's 'The noble tryumphaunt coronacyon':

> And so she passed forth through gracyous strete vnto leden hall / where was buylded a sumptuous and a costly pagent in mäner of a castell wherin

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[21] Arber, II, 41.

[22] Edward Hall, *Hall's Chronicle Containing the History of England* (London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1809), pp. 800–802.

> was fassyoned an heuenly roufe and vnder it vpon a grene was a roote or a stocke / wherout sprange a multytude of whyte roses & reed curyously wrought / so from the heuenly roufe descended a whyte faucon / and lyghted vpon the said stocke & roote / and incontynent descended an angell *with* goodly armony / havynge a close crowne bytwene his handes / & set it on the faucons heed: & on the said flour [floor] sate saynte ANNE in thye hyest place / on that one syde her progeny *with* scripture that is to wete / the thre marys *with* their issue/ þ^{t} is to vnderstande: MARY the mother of Christ / MARY SOLOME ye mother of ZEBEDEE / with the two chyldren of them / Also MARY CLEPONE with her husbande ALPHEE / with their four chyldren on ye other side . with other poetycal / verses sayd and songe / *with* a balade in englissh to her great prayse/ honour & to al her progeny also.

If at first Wynkyn de Worde seems uncertain as to whether the Queen's device is 'a roote or a stocke', he later resolves the problem – it is both. 'Stocke' here could be translated as 'stump'. Roses springing from a root (the Yorkist-Lancastrian house) which is also a stump (a growth which has apparently been cut off) represent a powerful political statement and make an important dynastic claim: the dead stock, one might say, has become a live stalk.[23] Hall's account (identical to that of BL MS Egerton 985 and BL MS Add. 6116), follows in its broad outline Wynkyn de Worde's 'The noble tryumphaunt coronacyon', although offering fewer details:

> so from thense she passed to leden hale where was a goodly pagent *with* a type and a havenly Rof and vndre the type was a goodly rote of golde sett on a litill mounteyne environed *with* redde roses & white oute of the type came down a faulcon all white & satt vpon the Rote and incontinent come doune an angell *with* greate melodye & sett a close crowne of golde on the Faulcons hede / and in the same pagint sat saynt Anne *with* all her Issue beneth her / and vnder mare children one made a goodly oracion to the Queene of the frutefulnes of saint Anne & of her generacion Trvsting that like frute shulde come of her. (BL MS Add. 6113, fol. 27^{v})

Gone here are the castle and the green; in their place is a mountain, and it sounds as if the mountain, not the root, is environed with roses (the exact relationship of the roses to the badge appears to be problematic; in versions of the badge still extant, the roses are usually treated as espaliered or trellised, sometimes at the foot of the stalk, sometimes springing from the root itself, occasionally at the base of the root[24]). In Hall's account, by contrast, root and stalk have been simplified to a single golden root. Nonetheless, in broad outline, the

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[23] Ives, p. 278.

[24] See Ives, plates 28, 35, 38, 39.

intention of the heraldic imagery is clear enough: the elements of the Queen's device, the falcon, the golden root and branch, the red and white Tudor roses, and the crown, have come together by natural selection (the falcon chooses to alight) and divine approbation (the angel crowns the falcon). The device may be read as a kind of rebus for Anne's elevation into the royal family based on the promise of new growth, pleasing to God.[25] A second reading of the device, however – as the heraldic equivalent of the *radix Jesse* – is suggested in Udall's Latin verses, abstracted by Furnivall:

> Fruitful Saint Anne bare three Maries; the offspring of her body, by a strange conception, bare the first founders of our holy Faith. Of that daughter was born Christ our Redeemer, foster-father of a vast family. Not without thought therefore, Queen Anne, do the citizens form this pageant in your honour. By her example, may you give us a race to maintain the Faith and the Throne.[26]

In describing this pageant of the Queen's badge, the scribe of Harley 41 departs radically from the exemplar, although he elsewhere follows in most particulars Wynkyn de Worde's pamphlet. There can be no question that he did not have the exemplar open before him as he wrote, for the similarities of phrasing and syntax are too great to think otherwise. Nonetheless, in his description of the third pageant, the writer clearly departs in a number of details from his source (noted here by italic print):

> *So from* thense she passed to ledenhall . where was a goodly pagyaunt with a type . and a hevenlv *roffe. and* vnder the type was *a roosse* of golde . *and the qwenes devise* sett on a lvtle mountayne environned with *redde and whyte roses.* and oute of the type came downe *the qwenes devise* . and sate vpon *the mountayne* . and incontynent came downe an anqell with grette melody . and sett a close crowne of gold *vpon the said devise and cognysance* . And in the same pagiaunt *were set certeyne ymages and parsonages certeyne virgyns representyng her name / right gooldy beseene / and oon of theym* made a goodly oracion to the qwene &c.

[25] London, p. 61.

[26] F. J. Furnivall, *Ballads from Manuscripts*, 4 vols. (London: For the Ballad Society, 1868–73), I, 376.

The changes here are quite interesting. First, the writer reports not a *root of gold*, but *a rose of gold*,[27] then adds, and *the queen's device*, by which he must mean the root. Rather than the 'root or stock' of 'The noble tryumphaunt coronacyon', then, we have here a root from which springs a single golden rose. Instead of the falcon, he writes again, the *queen's device*, which alights not on the 'root or stock', but on *the mountayne*, and finally, instead of the angel crowning the falcon on the root, he writes that the crown is set *vpon the said devise and cognysance* (see, for instance, the quarry with Anne's badge in Wethersfield Church, Essex, in which Anne's badge of crowned white falcon on golden stump (or stock) is itself crowned [plate 1]). It should be pointed out also that the scribe abbreviates rather pointedly the wishes of St. Anne and her progeny for the Queen's good fortune and propitious fecundity.

This account would excite little interest were it not for the fact that it reproduces accurately what the verses of Udall suggest was the actual pageantic scene: the falcon lighted not on the environed roses (something like a trellis or espalier), or on a root, (the first instance of the Queen's device in the passage above) but on a single golden rose:

> Vdallus. Behold and see the ffalcon white,
> how she begynneth hir winges to spred,
> And for our coumforte to take hir flight.
> But where woll she sease as you doo red :
> A rare sight, and yett to bee ioyed,
> on the Rose chief floure that euer was,
> This bird to light, that all birdes dothe passe. (BL MS Royal 18, fol. 8)

Further evidence for thinking that the falcon lighted on the rose, and not the root, is to be found in the English ballad that was sung upon Anne's departure from this pageant:

> And where by wrong
> She [that is, the falcon] hathe fleen long
> Vncertain where to light,
> hir self repose
> Vpon the Rose
> Now maye this ffalcon whight. (BL MS Royal 18, fol. 9)

The 'Songs and Ditties', as they survive, purport to have been written up, as it were, from the actual scripts, perhaps as a presentation

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[27] It might be objected that the 'flour' of Wynkyn de Worde's '& on the said flour' led the Harley scribe to the idea of the rose, but it is difficult to imagine, even if one reads it as 'flower' that Saint Anne would be seated upon it.

copy for Anne herself, so their insistence that the falcon lighted upon the rose rather than the 'root or stock' seems perplexing in the light of Wynkyn de Worde's pamphlet. There seems good reason to suppose, then, that the writer of BL MS Harley 41 actually saw the pageant at Ledenhall, saw that the falcon descended onto a large, golden rose, and so altered his copy of the exemplar to conform to his reading of the pageant. This suggests that all three elements, root, stalk, and flower were originally part of the pageant, and that the Marian imagery latent in the Queen's badge was surfaced and made explicit in the accounts of the pageantry issued under the King's impress, particularly the account of Wynkyn de Worde and the manuscripts that served as the sources for Hall's *Chronicle,* but suppressed in the BL MS Harley 41 account.

The author of BL MS Harley 41, as I will show, was probably a herald; familiar as he must have been with the Queen's badge, he uses some language that suggests the pageant departs in a number of ways from the Queen's 'devise and cognysaunce' – the root and the falcon. First, the falcon 'sett' upon the mountain, when normally it is shown, wings opposed (or indorsed), standing on one leg, the other bearing a scepter.[28] Second, the Queen's device on the mountain, there apparently before the falcon appears from the heavenly roof, must be the stump environed with roses, but the golden rose does not seem, elsewhere, at least, to be related to Anne's device. In fact, however, there is one iconographic parallel, a carving, crudely done to be sure, of Anne's shield of arms at the Beauchamp Tower in the Tower of London. This shows a close falcon stooping on what looks suspiciously like an artichoke, but which I take to be a multi-petaled rose (plate 2).[29] If I am right in thinking that Udall's verses and the account in BL MS Harley 41 represent an iconography closer to the actual London pageant, then the 1533 account in 'The noble tryumphaunt coronacyon' of Wynkyn de Worde has deliberately omitted the golden rose, whose symbolism is at best ambivalent (the falcon stooping on the rose might recall, with unhappy effect, another royal mistress, Edward III's Alice Perrers), to reinforce the desired root and stalk symbolism associated with the iconography of the Jesse tree and its insistence on the parallel lineages of sacred and secular authority. The scribe of BL MS Harley 41 seems unusually reticent regarding the elements of the Queen's device. He treats it only as a

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[28] Howard de Walden, Thomas Evelyn Scott-Ellis, *Banners, Standards, and Badges from a Tudor Manuscript* (London: The De Walden Library, 1904), plate 11.

[29] Ives, plate 40. See also, for instance, the rose that Mary Tudor holds in her right hand in the portrait of Mary Tudor, Queen of France and Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk, by an anonymous painter in Ives, plate 48.

Plate 1: Quarry with the badge of Anne Boleyn,
Wethersfield church, Essex

(Author's own photograph, by permission of the rector)

Plate 2: The personal badge of Anne Boleyn,
at the Beauchamp Tower in the Tower of London.
Crown copyright: Historic Royal Palaces

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the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office)

Plate 3: Queen Anne's falcon badge and the cipher "RH & AS"
("S" denoting Anne as *sponsa*)
on the coffer of the Provost's screen, King's College Chapel

(Reproduced by kind permission of
the Provost and Fellows of King's College, Cambridge)

heraldic cognizance; by suppressing its details, he suppresses as well their meaning.

Significantly, the only other major point of departure between BL MS Harley 41 and the exemplar also concerns the Queen's device. A pageant of the Queen's badge, very similar if not identical to the one presented by the merchants of the staple, was carried on a barge or 'foist' which accompanied the Mayor's barge up the river from Greenwich. Hall, following 'The Receyving', gives full details:

> On the left hand of the Maior was another Foyst, in the whiche was a mount & on the same stode a white Fawcon crouned vpon a rote of golde enuironed with white roses and red, whiche was the Quenes deuise: about which mount satte virgyns singyng & plaiyng swetely.[30]

As in the later account of the Ledenhall pageant, the scribe of BL MS Harley 41 leaves out all detail:

> On the left hande of the Mair was . another ffoyst in which was the qwenes deuise which was envyroned with roses white and rede . abowte whiche devise Sate virgyns syngyng and playing swetely. (fol. 3[v])

This departure from the exemplar suggests, as does the later pageant description, that the environed roses are not to be considered part of the Queen's device, despite the language of 'The Receyving', in which crowned falcon, root of gold, mount, and roses are included. In glossing over the details of the device, and calling attention only to the heraldic character of the pageant, *i.e.*, 'the queen's device' (a phrase certainly in Hall's account, but there subordinated to the symbols themselves), the author seems deliberately to suppress the meaning of the device as well. His treatment here is certainly consistent with his later presentation of the same device.

Such treatment raises some questions about the nature of BL MS Harley 41, its intended purpose and audience. Clearly a herald's manuscript, owned at one time by William Colbarne, York Herald, and certainly in the Herald's collection as late as 1558/9 when it was copied (with its variant readings of 'The Receyving') into College of Arms MS. I. 18, along with an account of the coronation pageants for Elizabeth, BL MS Harley 41 in its latter folios contains a miscellany of information of interest to a herald occupied with the Knights of the Bath, which indeed is how the manuscript is catalogued. Nonetheless, I believe these later folios represent a miscellany compiled when the original intentions of the manuscript were abandoned. So it is

[30] Hall, p. 801.

primarily with folios 1–16 that I am concerned. These contain, on folio 1 'The Names of the Knights of the Bayn made at the Creacion of Thomas Widville, Lorde Marques Dorsett, An. Dom. 1475', whose verso is blank. The text of the 'Receyving' begins on folio 2; on folio 12 is a sketch of the Queen in state with the disposition of the tables at her coronation dinner, followed by the various memoranda of 'Things to be Done' and the 'Order of Procedyng'. All of this is done in a large, beautifully calligraphic French Bastarde hand with blanks left for illuminated capitals, and on folio 7, large blanks that may have been left for illuminations or diagrams. In short, I would argue that BL MS Harley 41, like BL MS Royal 18, was intended as a presentation copy. The clue to its fate is contained, I think, in the initial folio of the creation of Thomas Widville, that is, Grey, first marquis of Dorset.[31]

The dynastic adulation and political manipulation involved in substituting the maternal name Widville for the paternal Grey is obvious, setting out the founding of the dynasty and linking it with the creation of the Tudor line, and in fact the 3rd marquis of Dorset, Henry Grey, although only sixteen, was the highest ranking Knight of the Bath created at Anne's coronation, and he bore the scepter before her at the coronation ceremony itself.[32] Furthermore, his grandmother, Cicely, the Dowager Marquess of Dorset, rode with the Dowager Duchess of Northumberland in the chariot directly behind the Queen in the London procession. The case I would outline, then, is that BL MS Harley 41 was intended as a presentation copy, probably for Henry Grey, for whom this coronation was an important event, as he attained his majority and married shortly afterwards, a presentation copy perhaps sponsored by his grandmother or his mother, Margaret Wotton Grey. Like the Duchess of Norfolk, who would not appear at

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[31] Thomas Grey (1451–1501), first marquis of Dorset, was the son of John Grey and Elizabeth Woodville, later wife of Edward IV. Thomas's second wife, Cicely, was the mother of Thomas Grey (1477–1530), the second marquis of Dorset, who married Margaret Wotton. Their son, Henry Grey (Duke of Suffok and father of Lady Jane Grey) was made a Knight of the Bath at the Coronation of Queen Anne. Although their fortunes were various (Henry and his brother Thomas were attainted and executed for their part in Wyatt's Rebellion), the Greys were intimately connected with Princess Mary Tudor throughout her career. In 1526, Thomas, the second marquis of Dorset, was Master of the Household of Princess Mary; the third of his sons, John, although imprisoned for his part in Wyatt's Rebellion, obtained pardon from Queen Mary through the intercession of his wife, Francis, daughter of Henry VIII's sister Mary. Staunch Protestants, the Greys may have particularly objected to the Marian iconography associated with Queen Anne Boleyn (*DNB* 627–47).

[32] J. S. Brewer and J. Gairdner, *Letters and Papers Domestic and Foreign of the Reign of Henry VIII.*, 2nd edn., 13 vols. (London: 1862–1920; repr. Vaduz: Kraus, 1965), VI, 246.

the 'Receyving' for the love she bore the previous Queen,[33] Margaret's own sympathies were undoubtedly with Katherine and her daughter Mary. In May, in a very discreetly worded letter, she begged to be excused, and although we do not know precisely excused from what, so discreet is the wording, participation in the Coronation seems likely.[34] We should note too, however, that an unflattering account records that costs for Knights of the Bath were over two hundred pounds, and that Margaret suffered financial difficulties all through this period. In its suppression of references to the offspring of St. Anne and in its refusal to detail the symbols of the Queen's device, BL MS Harley 41 would seem to accommodate Margaret's preferences (and an understandable reluctance to subscribe to the Marian imagery associated with Queen Anne) without undermining the significance of the ceremony in which her son played so prominent a part. I do not know why the project was abandoned (Margaret complained that she was 'unkindly and extremely escheated' by her son after he attained his majority[35]), but, once the initial project was abandoned, the first page gave the hint for using the volume as a memorandum book on Knights of the Bath.

If my reconstruction of the circumstances surrounding the composition and intention of the manuscript is correct, then in the account of the Ledenhall pageant we have the eye witness of not merely a scribe, but a herald, and the emphasis placed on 'devyce' in the account lends some support to as well as raising some question about the nature of the Queen's device and its relation to the pageant.

The white falcon had a long history as a royal supporter from Edward III on; more immediately, it was the crest of the Butlers, earls of Ormonde, whose heir had been recognized in 1529 to be Thomas Boleyn; it appears on the brass to Sir Thomas in Hever church, where it is, however, 'volant' rather than indorsed or 'close'.[36] Leland's verses for the St. Anne pageant state that the falcon appears because of this family connection. The device of the crown, scepter, roses and the tree stump, however, was new – although each element had antecedents (the root, for instance, was the canting badge for the manor of Woodstock,[37] and much of the symbolism had been associated with Henry from as early as the twenties. The confirmation charter to the Bishop of Exeter executed 12 January 1511, for example, shows a tree trunk with only

[33] Brewer, VI, 585.
[34] Brewer, VI, 233.
[35] *DNB*, pp. 627–28.
[36] Ives, plate 41.
[37] London, p. 60.

one living branch from which springs a large Tudor rose.[38] Prior to the coronation, Anne used various of her family arms, but not the falcon. Ives surmises that in anticipation of her marriage, Anne had been presented heraldic augmentations associated with the crown.[39] By 1533–4, Anne's patent, creating her lady marquise of Pembroke, incorporated the crowned falcon on roses in the massive initial letter H.[40]

The description of the badge in Wynkyn de Worde's 'The noble tryumphaunt coronacyon', then, is curiously inexact, including the notice of both root and stalk but suppressing the rose. Indeed, a quick survey of extant examples of the falcon badge, including that in the window at Wethersfield Church, Essex, and the badge in Anne's copy of 'The Ecclesiaste',[41] produces only one that follows that description precisely, that carved, with the cipher HA (which had proved the object of much derision in the 1533 pageant, being read as ha! ha!) in the coffer of the organ screen in King's College Chapel, Cambridge (plate 3).[42] The falcon, indorsed and crowned, bearing a scepter, stands on a stump from which springs a healthy stalk, crowded with roses at its base, and winding above the falcon's head to embrace the crown. The similarities between the description and the carving are very striking.

In presenting a close falcon stooping on a rose, the London pageant could have been easily misunderstood, particularly given the generally hostile climate Anne's marriage and coronation had created. No matter how flattering to Anne herself, the image of the falcon swooping down on the rose undoubtedly suggested other and more predatory possibilities; in any event, it could not convey the more powerful political message of the root with its flourishing stalk. So, I would suggest, 'The noble tryumphaunt coronacyon' represents less the actual details of the pageant than it does the iconographic and ultimately political significance of Anne's badge as it was developed after the pageant, with its Marian overtones somewhat subdued.

The natural connection between the pageant of St. Anne and the crowning of the falcon lies in the intervention of divinity in the procreative process; in each case, a type of 'sponsa' is hinted at. BL

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[38] See Erna Auerbach, Tudor Artists: A Study of Painters in the Royal Service and of Portraiture on Illuminated Documents from the Accesion of Henry VIII to the Death of Elizabeth I (London: Athlone, 1954), plate 5. Auerbach suggests a connection between heraldic devices and manuscript ornaments (pp. 29–31). The association of a large Tudor rose with Henry is everywhere in evidence in the document ornamentation.

[39] Ives, p. 279.

[40] Ives, p. 289.

[41] Ives, plate 35.

[42] Ives, plate 28.

MS Harley 41's reticence on the message of St. Anne then seems connected to the unwillingness to describe in detail the allegory of bird, flower, angel, with its suggestion of the root and stalk of Jesse that created Mary as both mother and Queen of Heaven – a parallel strongly hinted at in the *veni coronaberis* of the pageant at St. Paul's gate.

The scribe of BL MS Harley 41 attempts to minimize the political and theological message of the Queen's device by reducing its symbolism and by insisting on the essentially heraldic nature – 'the said devise and cognysance' – of the pageant. The author of 'The noble tryumphaunt coronacyon' works just the other way: by ignoring the elements of the pageant that might be seen in an unflattering light and relying on the power of the symbolism to adduce a natural connection between God's approbation of the Queen's elevation and the sanctity of St. Anne. In either case, we see the importance of the device as a symbol and the power of the press to re-touch and disseminate a political message. The power and persistence of this symbolism is perhaps hinted at in Shakespeare's play *King Henry VIII*. Responding to Lovell's report that Queen Anne's labour threatens to be fatal, Gardiner responds: 'The fruit she goes with / I pray for heartily, that it may find / Good time, and live: but for the stock, Sir Thomas, / I wish it grubbed up now',[43] a clear allusion to Anne's badge of root and stump. The Marian association is made earlier in the play when Anne, responding to the Lord Chamberlain's attestation of the King's favour, requests that he 'Vouchsafe to speak my thanks and my obedience, / As from a blushing handmaid, to his highness',[44] recalling Christendom's most celebrated handmaid, who replied to the angel of the Annunciation, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord' (Luke 1.38).

By reappropriating a medieval theme and positioning it squarely in a classicized, humanist setting, Henry legitimized his separation from papal authority and provided a religious 'type' for his Queen, a secular appropriation of religious imagery that was to bear full fruit in her daughter Elizabeth's assumed identity as the Virgin Mary.[45]

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[43] William Shakespeare, *King Henry VIII*, ed. by John Margeson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 5.i.20–23.

[44] *King Henry VIII*, 2.iii.72.

[45] Ives, p. 283.

CHRISTOPHER MIDDLETON AND ELIZABETHAN MEDIEVALISM

JOHN SIMONS

I AM WRITING IN an upstairs room in my house in Southport, which is a town in the north west of England. My house was built in 1830 and is one of the earliest in the suburb of Birkdale, an outpost of what was, in the early nineteenth century, a community still in the process of building. Yet the new town of Southport needed churches and the most obvious feature of the townscape from my study window is the top of a church tower that was erected in the 1860s. If I did not know something of the history of this church or something of medieval architecture I would assume that I was looking at a medieval building. The architects of Southport and the people who moved to the new town chose the late Gothic style for a reason. They wanted to root their Faith and, by extension, the fate of their town, in a past which offered them solidity, continuity, certainty and, above all, the sense of a past which was freighted with good values. These were religious values, social values and, to some extent, political values. To build a church in the medieval style embodied these values in stone. A community needs a history and my parish church offers in its very fabric a metaphor of the history to which the previous occupants of my house may have aspired.

The story of Victorian medievalism and of the values that were embodied by the building of churches such as the one I am looking at now has been well told.[1] I do not need to repeat it here, especially in an essay offered to Leslie Workman, who knows about such matters much better than I do.[2] I start with this anecdote simply to make a preliminary point about the nature of medievalism. The motive forces behind the medieval movement in the nineteenth century are set within a very specific set of historical circumstances. The Middle Ages were explored in architecture, in literature, in painting, in sculpture, in ceremony, in popular culture and even in sport in order to provide a

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[1] See, for example, Alice Chandler, *A Dream of Order* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), Ian Anstruther, *The Knight and the Umbrella* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1986), Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

[2] See Leslie Workman, 'Medievalism and Romanticism', *Poetica*, 39/40 (1994), 1–44.

way of speaking about the alienating experience of incipient modernity. The Middle Ages were exploited to provide a cultural space and, more importantly, a symbolic language by means of which an imagined history could be used to recuperate the values that technological progress, scientific scepticism and political radicalism seemed likely to sweep away. The medievalism of Victorian Britain can thus be seen as a functional response to the mood swings of the age. To abstract this argument from the nineteenth century, medievalism can be defined as the process by which the Middle Ages are constructed as a discourse which is used to shape, contest, and comment on the concerns of another time.

Seen in this light, the process of medievalism is a permanent and trans-historical feature of British culture and the Middle Ages are a permanent presence in the national consciousness as this manifests itself in the material production and practice of its life. There seems to be no period when medievalism cannot be seen at work. For example, we can observe, in the recent past and in the present, 'Sword and Sorcery' novels and fantasy role-play games, the medieval detective novels of Ellis Peters, the vogue of Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* and the industry which grew up around the novels of J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis. More worryingly, the Middle Ages have been invoked as a model for understanding a post-modern world which is defined by global communication through non-literate media (I think that 'post-literate media' would be more accurate), a confrontation of the West with Islam, and morally charged pandemics from AIDS to Ebola.[3] In Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* a character promises to 'get medieval' with another's 'ass'. In a recent issue of *The Daily Telegraph* Feargal Keane, a senior BBC journalist, is reported as having said, in the course of the prestigious Huw Weldon Memorial Lecture, that the popularity of *The X-Files* threatens to replace serious reporting by 'the rumour-ridden gloom of the Middle Ages'.[4] In the eighteenth century the rise of the Gothic sensibility and Romanticism are clear manifestations of medievalism, as is the continued presence of medieval story material in popular literature and the beginnings of modern philological practice.

I believe that it is not far fetched to see Sir Thomas Malory as a fifteenth-century medievalist who consciously drew on a medieval past in order to construct a critique of contemporary chivalry. Even in the very early fourteenth century the author of the romance of *Havelok*

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[3] There are numerous examples of this. The most obvious are two essays by Umberto Eco, 'Dreaming the Middle Ages' and 'The Return of the Middle Ages' both in Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyper-reality* (London: Picador, 1986), pp. 61–72 and 73–85.

[4] *The Daily Telegraph*, 19 September 1997, p.4.

finds himself moved to a lengthy passage of praise for the good King Athelwold:

> In þat time a man þat bore
> Of red gold upon hijs bac,
> In a male with or blac,
> Ne funde he non þat him misseyde
> N[e] with iuele on hond leyde.
> Þa*n*ne micthe chapme*n* fare
> Þuruth Englond wit here ware,
> And baldelike beye and selle*n*
> Oueral þer he wilen dwellen –
> In gode burwes and þer-fram
> Ne fu*n*den he non þat dede he*m* sham,
> Þat he were*n* sone to sorwe brouth
> An pouere maked and browt to nouth.
> Þa*n*ne was Engelond at hayse –
> Michel was svich a king to preyse
> Þat held so Engelond in grith !
> Krist of heuene was him with –
> He was Engelondes blome.[5]

This passage is more than just an example of the medieval sense of history and more than a simple deployment of the literary convention of the eulogy of earlier kings. It is a use of the Saxon past to comment, in a very direct and literal fashion, on the events of the reign of Edward I. At this time, internal struggles and a shift in the position of the old aristocracy were balanced by the growth of the London companies. The Crown came increasingly to depend on foreign (especially Italian) capital and this needed to be moved securely around the country.[6] What we see here is, at least arguably, medievalism in one of its earliest manifestations. A much fuller argument could be mounted to show how, even in the high Middle Ages, an earlier medieval past could be exploited to provide an account of contemporary events.

However, in this essay I want to talk about the late sixteenth century. In this period, which conventional accounts of literary and cultural history mark as the high point of the English Renaissance, medieval texts were still widely circulating. There was still a market for manuscript copies of medieval narrative and this even included hand copies of early printed books. Medieval romances continued to be

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[5] *Havelok*, ed. by G. V. Smithers (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), ll. 45–63.

[6] See J. L. Bolton, *The Medieval English Economy* (London: Dent, 1980), pp. 175–77.

printed in something like their original forms, although with modernised language, well into the seventeenth century. There was a vogue for the new generation of chivalric texts from Spain and Portugal and, given the massive popularity of these enormous narratives, it is astonishing that they are so often ignored in descriptions of the literature of this time. In addition, a host of writers who stood outside the charmed circle of wealth and privilege wrote new versions of chivalric romances that were designed to appeal to an audience of newly literate citizens. Sometimes, as in the cases of Anthony Munday's *Zelauto*, Henry Robarts's *Pheander*, or Robert Parry's *Moderatus* these authors were modelling their works, albeit in attenuated form, on the great cycles of *Amadis* and *Palmerin*. At other times they were attempting to use the deep structures of chivalric romances to produce new works of fiction which addressed the mercantile-protestant nationalism of their ideal reader. The most celebrated example of this kind of text is Richard Johnson's *The Seaven Champions of Christendome* in which the life and adventures of St George are described at length using a framework derived from the fourteenth-century romance *Bevis of Hampton*.[7]

The medievalism of the citizen writers (and their work is most fully comprehensible in the context of London) was just a functional as that of the patrons and builders of Victorian churches. They were responding to a situation in which the new opportunities for the consumption of culture afforded by the development of a printing and publishing industry were not matched by the growth of a literature that spoke to the concerns of the citizen. The productions of the English Renaissance may well have seemed either too exclusive in their appeal to specific coteries or politically suspect in their reliance on Continental and, therefore, Roman Catholic sources. The romance cycles discussed above escape this ideological impurity because, I suspect, of their appeal to narrative traditions that were so firmly rooted that no specific religious context could be attributed to them. Even so, it is noteworthy that Richard Johnson found no embarrassment in casting his *Seaven Champions* as a series of Saints' lives. Indeed, as early as 1566, John Partridge had felt justified in writing a Protestant version of the life of St Plasidas, a text which has its source in *The Golden Legend* and an important analogue in the

[7] See Jennifer Fellows, '*Bevis Redivivus*, the printed editions of *Sir Bevis of Hampton*' in *Romance Reading on the Book*, ed. by Jennifer Fellows, Rosalind Field, Gillian Rogers and Judith Weiss (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996), pp. 251–68, and John Simons, 'Medievalism as Cultural Process in Pre-industrial Popular Literature', *Studies in Medievalism*, VII (1995), 5–21.

Middle English romance *Sir Isumbras*.[8] In this situation it was natural that, in searching for sources on which to base new prose fiction, the citizen writers turned to the traditional chivalric romances. However, they amended them in such a way that their chivalric content was wholly or partially displaced by material that depicted the lives of heroic Englishman who had the virtues of being honourable traders, artisans and patriots.[9] The medieval basis of Elizabethan popular fiction can thus be said to have constituted a conscious appropriation of the Middle Ages that described and provided symbols for a new and emergent way of understanding the world.

However, it was not only citizen authors who plundered medieval romance for the sources of new texts written in the modern style. For example, we might consider Thomas Lodge's romance *Rosalynde*. This is best known today as the source of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. This text takes its basic story from the Middle English romance *Gamelyn* and close verbal parallels at some points of Lodge's text shows that he must have had access to a manuscript:

> As sone as Gamelyn come ther the place was
> He lighte doun of his stede and stod on the gras;
> And ther he herd a frankelyn wayloway syng,
> [...]
> Goode man seyde Gamelyn wilt thou wel doun
> Hold myn hors whil my man draweth of my schoon.

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[8] Partridge's *History of Plasidas* was ed. by John Payne Collier, *Illustrations of Old English Literature*, 3 volumes (London, 1866; repr. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1966), III. In *Saints' Legends* (Boston, 1916), pp. 318–19, G. H. Gerould commented on this work and *The Seaven Champions* and characterised the latter as 'an ultra-Protestant travesty on the legends of certain Saints whose names had become so deeply impressed on folk tradition that they could be treated as heroes of romance.'

[9] See John Simons, 'Open and Closed Books: a semiotic approach to the history of Elizabethan and Jacobean Popular Romance', in *Jacobean Poetry and Prose*, ed. by Clive Bloom (London, 1988), pp. 8–24, and John Simons, 'Transforming the Romance: Some Observations on Early Modern Popular Narrative' in *Narrative Strategies in Early English Fiction*, ed. by Wolfgang Gortschacher and Holger Klein, Salzburg Studies in English Literature (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1995), pp. 273–88. More general accounts of the position of artisans and merchants in early popular fiction are Laura C. Stevenson, *Praise and Paradox* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), and Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). By far the best overview remains Louis B. Wright, *Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1935).

> All this while stoode Rosader and sawe this tragedie: who noting the undoubted vertue of the francklins minde, alighted of from his horse, and presentlie sat downe on the grasse, and commaunded his boy to pull of his bootes.[10]

Since *Gamelyn* was not printed until 1721 (and there is no record of a lost Elizabethan printed version) this shows how medieval manuscripts, perhaps in sixteenth-century copies, were still circulating in London in the 1590s and adds another dimension to our understanding of the contexts in which Elizabethan authors operated.[11] In the case of Lodge this clear evidence of access to a manuscript is particularly interesting as he can by no means be associated with the group of citizen writers whose activities were outlined above and is much more easily related to court and university circles.

The case of Lodge's *Rosalynde* and its debt to *Gamelyn* is worth lingering over. This text is not a citizen romance in which the adventures of robust Englishmen are played out through the structures of Middle English traditional narrative but a conscious exercise in Arcadian Mannerism. The text also shows a possible debt to Sidney's *Old Arcadia*, elements which may have been borrowed from John Lyly's comedy *Gallathea* (*Rosalynde* was subtitled *Euphues' Golden Legacie* in homage to Lyly's most famous work) and strong parallels with parts of Bartholomew Yonge's translation of Jorge de Montemayor's *Diana*. In all three cases Lodge could only have seen these texts in manuscript. The history of the circulation of manuscripts of Sidney's work is well-known and has been comprehensively analysed by Woudhuysen, but the case of Lodge's knowledge of Yonge's work is interesting as it provides a link between his aspirations as a courtly writer and the circulation and copying of Middle English texts in the late sixteenth century.[12] Lodge and Yonge were both associated with recusant circles and were both members of Inns of

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[10] *Gamelyn*, in *Middle English Verse Romances* ed. by Donald B. Sands (New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1966), ll. 195–97, 207–8. *Rosalynde*, Sig. C4^{r}.

[11] The reason why *Gamelyn* was not printed early is a mystery as its rugged ethos, stress on Englishness, and 'Robin Hood'-type story would surely have appealed to the Elizabethan audience as *Rosalynde* and *As You Like It* suggest. It may be that the manuscript tradition was comparatively late (there is nothing before the fifteenth century and most copies date from the 1450s onwards) so that what may have been a relatively rare text had not embedded itself in the popular mind. It also had an association with Chaucer and, indeed, it was first printed as part of Urry's edition of *The Canterbury Tales*. This may have inhibited the desire for a separate print.

[12] Henry R. Woudhuysen, Sir Philip Sidney and the Circulation of Manuscripts 1558–1640 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1996).

Court in the early 1580s.[13] Yonge had been given a copy of *Diana* by Edward Banyster who was a member of the Middle Temple and also a recusant.[14] However, the connection does not end there, for in 1584 Banyster had copied a manuscript of a poem by Sidney.[15] In addition Banyster was the scribe of at least two manuscripts of Middle English romances which he almost certainly copied from early printed versions.[16] It is not unreasonable to assume, given Banyster's interest in medieval texts and the professional and religious common ground between himself and Lodge, that the manuscript copy of *Gamelyn* from which he derived the basic narrative of *Rosalynde* was provided by Banyster.

A further connection between Lodge and Banyster can be made through Lodge's work *The Famous, True and Historical Life of Robert, Second Duke of Normandie* which appeared in 1591, one year after *Rosalynde*. This text is based on the medieval story of Robert the Devil. A translation from a French edition of 1496 had been printed by Wynkyn de Worde in about 1500 and reprinted some seventeen years later. In 1564 Banyster had made a manuscript copy of this text as it had been printed by Pynson in about 1510. Although it is possible that Lodge worked from a copy of de Worde's translation it is perhaps more likely, given the relationship between the complex of sources for *Rosalynde* and what we know of Banyster, that he worked from a copy provided by Banyster. What we find then is that Elizabethan medievalism was confined not only to antiquarian scholarship and to citizen authors who wanted to give new form to old texts, but also that it was present at the very heart of the circles which are more usually associated with the new literature of the English Renaissance. It might also be noted that, whereas for the citizen writers medieval narrative seems to have provided a vehicle which could easily be adapted for the expression of Protestant convictions, we see in the medievalism of Lodge and Banyster an example of the connection

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[13] Yonge entered the Middle Temple in 1582, Lodge had been admitted to Lincoln's Inn in 1578.

[14] Woodhuysen, p. 243.

[15] Woudhuysen, pp. 242–43.

[16] Woudhuysen, p. 244. See also Martin C. Seymour, 'MSS. Douce 261 and Egerton 3132A, and Edward Banyster', *Bodleian Library Record*, 10 (1978–82), 162–63, Carol M. Meale, '"Prenes: engre": an early sixteenth-century presentation copy of *The Erle of Tolous*' in Jennifer Fellows and others, pp. 221–63, and Maldwyn Mills, 'The illustrations of British Library MS Egerton 3132A and Bodleian Library MS Douce 261', in *Essays and Poems Presented to Daniel Huws*, ed. by Tegwyn Jones and E. B. Fryde (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 1994), pp. 307–27. I am indebted to Professor Mills for a conversation about Banyster and for his thoughts on my ideas about the possible connection between Banyster and Lodge.

between chivalric romance and Roman Catholicism. This connection plainly existed in the minds of English humanists such as Ascham and was notoriously articulated by Nashe who, in 1588, referred to these texts as 'the fantasticall dreames of those exiled abbie lubbers'.[17] Could it be that Banyster's interest in romance and Lodge's direct use of medieval materials were a semi-clandestine attempt to keep alive what they saw as the culture of traditional religion in a hostile and dangerous Tudor state?[18] If this is the case, then we see yet another and, hitherto, barely explored dimension of Elizabethan medievalism at work in this complex of relationships.

In dealing with Lodge in some detail I have been concerned to establish, albeit briefly, some sense of the intricacy of the position of Middle English texts in late sixteenth-century England and to show how medievalism in this period cannot be described or analysed through single factor explanations. I want to turn now to the work of Christopher Middleton. This little known writer has some things in common with Lodge in that his work uses medieval sources and does not fit readily into the context of popular literature. He may have been a graduate – a man of the same name graduated from Brasenose College, Oxford, in December 1580 at the age of twenty – but there is no real evidence of his life other than the four works that he is known to have written and the two that have been attributed to him.[19]

The first of these was a version of Sir Everard Digby's *De Arte Natandi* (1587) which appeared in 1595 as *A Short Introduction for to Learne to Swim*. This eminently practical work was followed in 1596 by *The Historie of Heaven: containing the Poetical Fictions of all the Starres in the Firmament, gathered from amongst all the Poets and Astronomers*. This is a learned poem crammed full of classical allusion and suggests that Middleton may have been a man of some education. The dedication, which was written by 'C. K.' (presumably this was the work's publisher, C. Knight) refers to the author's 'yong muse' and describes it as 'home-borne'.[20] This presumably means that Middleton was new to the literary world. If he was the Brasenose graduate he would have been 35 or 36 at the time so not young by Elizabethan

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[17] Thomas Nashe, *The Anatomie of Absurditie*, ed. by Ronald B. McKerrow, *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, 2nd edn rev. F. P. Wilson, 5 vols. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), I, p. 11. Ascham had made his famous attack on the monastic origins and the 'open manslaughter and bold bawdrye' of chivalric romance in *The Schoolmaster* (1570).

[18] The usage 'traditional religion' is borrowed from Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

[19] Speculation on Middleton's life may be found in *The Dictionary of National Biography*.

[20] *Historie of Heaven*, Sig. A^{r}.

standards. In 1596 appeared the two works that have been attributed to Middleton and also published by Knight. These were *The first part of the nature of a woman. Fitly described in a Florentine historie* and *The second part of the historie, called the nature of a woman.* If Middleton was the author of these works they show him to have been familiar with that stream of European thought which is generally seen as characterising the productions of the English Renaissance. In 1597 came *The famous historie of Chinon of England*: I will deal with this at some length below.

Middleton completed his literary career in 1600 with *The legend of Humphrey duke of Glocester.*[21] This piece is interesting in that it describes a medieval figure and in that it shows us something of the audience for which a man like Middleton seems to have been writing. The work is dedicated to the Bedfordshire worthy Sir Jarvis Clifton and contains laudatory verses by Robert Allott, John Weever and Michael Drayton. Allott is an insignificant figure but the fact that Weever and Drayton contributed to the work strongly suggests that Middleton had gained some sort of a toehold in the literary world. Humphrey of Gloucester is today best known for his contribution, through patronage, to the introduction of continental scholarship into England and for the library, now part of the Bodleian, which bears his name. His tomb in old St Paul's was a familiar landmark of Tudor London and gentlemen who were down on their luck would linger about it in the hopes of meeting someone who would buy them dinner. Those who were out of luck at the end of the day were said to 'dine with Duke Humphrey'.[22] This custom is alluded to in Weever's dedicatory poem:

> Yee dayly wayters on Duke Humphrey's table,
> And hourly walkers by Duke Humphey's shrine,
> If that for meagre famine yee be able,
> Right to peruse a wel-pen'd witye line,
> Wait, walk no more, on's table by his shrine,
> But, with Duke Humphrey's legend (gentles) dine.

If there is any accuracy in these ironic comments we can see in them a reader who was a poverty-stricken member of the gentry or a middle class aspirant to social advancement. This picture accords well with the kind of person that Middleton himself may well have been and characterises an important group of writers and readers in the late-sixteenth century metropolis.

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[21] Repr. in *The Harleian Miscellany*, 12 vols (London, 1813), X, pp. 164–89.

[22] On this custom see Gamini Salgado, *The Elizabethan Underworld* (London: Dent, 1977), p. 24.

It is with this kind of reader in mind that we can turn to *Chinon of England*, a text which, like Lodge's *Rosalynde,* is an intriguing mixture of medieval sources and more modern and fashionable elements. Before discussing the work in detail it is worth pausing to look at an unusual feature: the dedication (to Edward Stanley) was not written by Middleton himself but by the printer John Danter. Danter plainly thought this odd as he wrote that:

> From the time of my first entraunce into Printing until now, it is the first Booke of this kinde I euer had power to dedicate.[23]

There is also evidence that the choice of dedicatee was not Middleton's but Danter's for as he says:

> The Authour of this Booke hath left it to the wide world without a Patron, perchance esteeming it vnworthie protection; neyther doo I thinke it the least part worthie your protection.[24]

This is odd. Professional authors in the later sixteenth century saw the choice of patron as an important aspect of the potential success of their work and, certainly, as a very important aspect of the income that they hoped their work would generate. It is also strange as a professional author would normally have seen a work through the press and therefore have been more intimately connected with the productive process than seems to have been the case here. Certainly, there is plenty of evidence of careless printing and this suggests very strongly that Middleton did not involve himself in the press shop. For example, a character called Sir Calor suddenly appears, unannounced, as the son of Sir Lancelot and between Sig. I4^{r} and Sig. L4^{v} there is consistent confusion of the names of Cassiopeia's three brothers. It may well be that Middleton was simply not resident in London in 1597. Equally, it could be that Middleton did not consider himself as a professional author and saw writing as a gentlemanly accomplishment that did not demand the attention to the industrial aspects of his craft which a closer relationship with Danter would have implied. This would certainly accord with my sense of him as an educated man whose literary career was designed to demonstrate status. But it is still odd: although Middleton's talents may have been limited it is difficult not to conclude that the many errors and the generally rushed and careless

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[23] *Chinon,* Sig. A2^{r}
[24] *Chinon*, Sig. A2^{v}

printing of *Chinon* are the result of Danter's working without the benefit of authorial revision of the galleys and perhaps even with an unrevised manuscript.

The possible tension between Middleton as a gentleman and Middleton as a writer struggling to break into the literary world is also reflected in the relationship between his printer and publisher. The printer, John Danter, was known as a producer of popular material such as ballads and pamphlets. He often worked at the lower end of the market and specialised in books that could be bought cheap but offered a good volume of sale. As Sheavyn has pointed out he was always prepared to taken on work for other stationers.[25] The publisher, however, was Cuthbert Burby who stood towards the opposite end of the spectrum and was a publisher of fine literature.[26] It is, perhaps, a mark of Middleton's opinion of his work that he took it to Burby. Burby and Danter did have connections though: Danter was a friend of Thomas Nashe during that splenetic character's controversy with Gabriel Harvey but Burby (who was Harvey's publisher) also published a pamphlet by Nashe.[27] As we shall see below, Burby and Danter also worked together on the production of the first part of Johnson's *The Seaven Champions of Christendome*. What all this shows is that we must exercise caution in assuming that the superficial features of a publisher's or printer's output may be used as a wholly reliable guide to the relationships which existed within the Elizabethan literary industry. However, the association of Burby and Danter in the production of Middleton's work may reflect some uncertainties within the work itself. In many ways, the inconsistency between the status of Middleton's text and the contexts of its production is similar to that which is also apparent in the case of Robert Parry's *Moderatus*.[28] This text, like *Chinon*, is an isolated romance that blends medieval chivalric material with more courtly elements. Its author was a gentleman who moved in fairly exalted circles and yet it was printed by Richard Jones who, like Danter, more usually specialised in cheap literature which was designed to appeal to a popular market. I suspect that by the end of

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[25] Phoebe Sheavyn, *The Literary Profession in the Elizabethan Age* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1967), pp. 68–69. Danter appeared as a character in the comedy *The Second Part of the Return from Parnassus* where he is first shown trying to drive down the price of a book but, when he learns it is to be called *A Chronicle of Cambridge Cuckolds,* then agrees to 'have it whatsoever it costs'. Quoted in H. S. Bennett, *English Books and Readers 1558 to 1603* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 281.

[26] Sheavyn, p. 67.

[27] Sheavyn, p. 87.

[28] On this text see John Simons, 'Robert Parry's *Moderatus*: a study in Elizabethan romance' in Jennifer Fellows and others, pp. 237–50.

the sixteenth century the status of books that were too readily identifiable with popular romances was becoming doubtful. Although texts like *Moderatus* and *Chinon* are far from popular in their appeal they were likely to have been seen as being on the border between two audiences. This perception might explain the apparent inconsistency between their style and sources and the conditions in which they were produced.

Chinon of England is a pseudo-Arthurian text. It was characterised by Margaret Schlauch as being one of a number of English imitations of the *Amadis* and *Palmerin* cycles. She points out that its 'turgid language and confused plot' make it 'almost unintelligible'.[29] It is certainly the case that Middleton was no great stylist (one of his sentences has 289 words) but Schlauch's association of *Chinon* with the Peninsular romances is true only in as far as complexity of plot and a blending of adventure with reflection on courtly behaviour are concerned. In fact, *Chinon* draws on three different kinds of material for its sources and influences. These are: continental and classical, Middle English, and contemporary English. Middleton's medievalism or rather, medievalism as it operates in Middleton's writing, can only be fully understood when the relationships of these three areas are teased out and I shall now explore them one by one.

The sole editor of *Chinon* thus far, points out that Middleton's book was designed to appeal to:

> readers who might be expected to care for
> the great writers of antiquity and yet might be
> enticed into reading a quasi-medieval romance
> if classical allusions were liberally scattered along
> the pages.[30]

This is certainly accurate; at least in so far as it is true that *Chinon* is not like a citizen romance. The text is loaded with reference to classical myth but this has a mainly decorative function and does not affect the basic structure of the narrative. More important is the debt to Boccaccio. Mead wondered if the name of Middleton's hero derived from 'the famous old castle town on the Vienne'.[31] In fact, it comes from the story of Cimon, which appears in the *Decameron* (Giornata V, Novella I). In this tale, a strong but simple-minded young man who

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[29] Margaret Schlauch, *Antecedents of the English Novel 1400–1600* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 171.

[30] W. H. Mead, The Famous Historie of Chinon of England, with his strange aduentures for the loue of Celestina daughter to Lewis King of Fraunce, Early English Text Society, Original Series, 165 (London: Oxford University Press, 1925), p. lix.

[31] Mead, p. lv.

is the despair of his family suddenly emerges as a brave and noble hero. This is precisely the case with Chinon who passes 'from the helples horror of darke ignorance to the approving prowesse of princely pusance.'[32] Although Boccaccio's work was not completely translated into English until 1620 there are a number of ways in which Middleton could have known this story. He could have read it in the original or in Latin or in Le Maçon's French translation. He could have read *A Pleasant and delightfull history, of Galesus Cymon and Iphigenia*, a versification by an author known as T. C., which was published in 1565.[33] However, it is much more likely that he came across the story embedded in the first part of Robert Greene's *Morando. The Tritameron of Love* (1587).[34] Apart from the basic story Middleton could also have found here a quasi-phonetic spelling of the hero's name (Chimon) which Greene probably got from Le Maçon. Greene is so ubiquitous a figure in the literary milieu of the late sixteenth century that is almost inconceivable that Middleton, who seems to have occupied the same uneasy space between the world of learning and the world of popular literature, would not have been familiar with his work.

The probable debt to Greene enables us to place Middleton in the company of those professional writers who were seeking to gain reputation but, at the same time, to appeal to the large audience which would guarantee a reasonable return for their efforts. It is not, therefore, surprising that we can find in *Chinon* the clear influence of at least one of those Middle English romances that had retained their currency well into the sixteenth century and were still capable of attracting a significant audience. This is *Guy of Warwick* which was one of the earliest of the Middle English romances to be printed (by de Worde, probably in 1497 and by Pynson in 1500) and was issued, in a very full version, by Copland in 1565. The adventures of Guy were a staple of popular ballads and, in 1609, the citizen writer Samuel

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[32] *Chinon*, Sig. D4^{v}.

[33] On translations of Boccaccio see Herbert G. Wright, *Boccaccio in England from Chaucer to Tennyson* (London: University of London Press, 1957), and the same author's *The First English Translation of Boccaccio* (Upsala, 1953). Beroaldo's Latin version of *Cymon and Iphigenia* appeared in 1498. Le Maçon's translation was first printed in 1545 and exerted some influence on texts that Middleton would have known. See Herbert G. Wright, 'The indebtedness of Painter's translations from Boccaccio in *The Palace of Pleasure* to the French version of Le Maçon', *Modern Language Review*, 46 (1951), 431–35, and Herbert G. Wright, 'How did Shakespeare come to know the *Decameron*?', *Modern Language Review*, 50 (1955), 45–48.

[34] Alexander B. Grosart (ed.), *The Works of Robert Greene*, 15 volumes, (London: Huth Library, 1881–1883), III.

Rowlands produced a modernised account of the tale in verse.[35] If any romance can be seen as archetypical it is *Guy of Warwick* and, in *Chinon of England*, Middleton plainly drew on this text for his account of the wooing of Laura by Sir Lancelot. A table will show the similarities:

GUY	*CHINON*
Early in the narrative Guy leaves the court after Felice has told him that she will not accept his suit until he has proved himself as a knight.	Early in the narrative Lancelot leaves to 'seeke straunge adventures' in honour of Laura.
With one companion Guy lands in France where he hears of a great tournament.	With one companion Lancelot lands in France where he hears of a great tournament.
After a night at an inn he makes his way to the tournament where he is victorious.	After a night with a hermit he makes his way to the tournament where he is victorious.
During the fight he overthrows the Emperor of Almaine's son.	During the fight the Emperor of Almaine's son is overthrown by the son of the Sultan of Babylon whom Lancelot then kills.
The King asks his identity.	The King asks his identity.
He rejects the hand of the Princess but sends his other prizes back to England.	He rejects the hand of the Princess but sends his other prizes back to England.

It might be argued that this is a stock episode from chivalric romance and that to claim a specific debt to *Guy of Warwick* places the evidence under too much strain. However, the sequence and detail is very specific and, in any case, the ubiquity of the *Guy of Warwick* story makes it highly unlikely that Middleton would not have known it and so the influence could be unconscious. The shift in which Lancelot kills the conqueror of the Emperor of Almaine's son helps to establish him as a Christian hero and also enables the motivation of a

[35] For a very full account of the printing history of *Guy of Warwick* see Ronald S. Crane, 'The Vogue of *Guy of Warwick* from the Close of the Middle Ages to the Romantic Revival', *PMLA*, 30 (1915), 125–94.

subsequent episode, also highly conventional: an invasion by the Sultan of Babylon's army. The chapter heading for this episode promises that Lancelot's chief opponent will be 'Roderigo Duke of Austria', but this character never makes an appearance and the text is entirely taken over by tried and trusted material from a familiar source. Middleton is much more interested in describing the detail of the costly accoutrements of some of the combatants than in lengthy accounts of the fight itself. In this he moves away from his Middle English source and towards the concerns of more modern chivalric texts such as *Amadis de Gaulle*. This distancing is another feature of the awkward placement of the text between popular romances which drew heavily on traditional medieval material and the attempt to cater for a superficially more refined reader.

Middleton also drew on a more recent neo-chivalric text for the episode in which Chinon rescues Sir Lancelot, Sir Triamore and Sir Tristram from imprisonment. At this point in the text there is a consistent use of the kind of magic and enchantment which is common in the Peninsular romances but there seems to be more direct English source: John Bourchier, Lord Berners's translation of *Huon of Bordeaux*.[36] This work went through a number of editions (some now lost) between 1515 and 1601. Mead has argued that *Chinon* has a generalised debt to *Huon* because of its large amount of fairy material but, in fact, the granting of an enchanted sword and a fairy page by King Oberam suggests a much more specific affiliation.[37] The probable use of Berners's work shows the complexity of Middleton's medievalism as he is here adopting material from a text that was, in itself, part of the first wave of the revival of medieval material. It also demonstrates how difficult it is to draw hard and fast lines between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance and shows how romances of chivalry were still attractive sources for new narrative fiction even in the late 1590s.

An even more significant influence is from the first part of Richard Johnson's *The Seaven Champions of Christendome*. This first appeared in 1596 and, just as *Guy of Warwick* may be seen as the paradigmatic Middle English romance, *The Seaven Champions* may stand as the typical Elizabethan chivalric narrative. The episode in which Chinon rescues Cassiopeia borrows from Johnson an Egyptian

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[36] On Berners see Norman F. Blake, 'William Caxton's Chivalric Romances and the Burgundian Renaissance in England', *English Studies*, 57 (1976), 1–10, and Norman F. Blake, 'Lord Berners: a survey', *Medievalia et Humanistica*, 2 (1971), 119–32. The same author's *William Caxton and his World* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1969) is also useful.

[37] Mead, p. lviii.

setting and an imprisonment in a cave by a witch. In addition, the way in which Johnson combines and organises the adventures of St George and the other six champions is paralleled in Middleton's account of the adventures of Chinon and the other knights. There is a chronological difficulty here in that there is such a short time between the first appearance of Johnson's work and the printing of *Chinon*. Middleton may well have seen a manuscript of Johnson's text, as it was printed and published in another collaboration between Danter and Burby. The second part of *The Seaven Champions* appeared in 1597 and would therefore have been going through the press at much the same time as *Chinon*.

It may, of course, be the case that Middleton saw the work in print and wrote very quickly. This possibility – attractive though it is in the light of Middleton's less than careful approach to the English language and the normal protocols of narrative consistency – is weakened by the existence of a lost play, *The First Part of the Famous Historye of Chinon of England*. This was entered in the Stationers' Register by Gosson and Danter as early as the 20th January 1596 and performed, as *Chinone of England*, by the Admiral's Men twelve times between 3rd January and 10th November 1599.[38] If the play showed an influence from Johnson then Middleton must have known Johnson's work before it was printed. However neither the play as performed nor the romance is referred to as a 'first part'. Greg pointed out that the prose text falls 'into two quite independent sections (Chapters i – vi and vii – xiii)'. He goes on to argue that 'the play must have been based on the romance while still in manuscript...In that case the play was probably based on the first part [of the romance] only'.[39] The Cassiopeia incident comes in the second half so it must surely have been completed as part of an extension of the text that took place after the registration of the play. This gives the necessary time for Middleton to have seen Johnson's work and make his borrowing. The early date of registration also establishes a possible connection between Middleton and Danter at least a year before the printing of *Chinon*.

The association with the theatre opens up one more possible line of

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[38] Edmund K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols (London: Oxford University Press, 1923), IV, p. 399.

[39] William W. Greg, *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, 4 volumes, (London: The Bibliographical Society , 1939–1959), II, p. 968. It is possible that the second part of Johnson's *Seaven Champions of Christendome* was printed by Edward Allde (again for Burby). There is a connection between Middleton and Allde as it was Allde who printed his *Legend of Humphrey duke of Glocester*. Allde was very much a printer who, like Danter, worked with an eye to the market. See Ronald B. McKerrow, 'Edward Allde as a Typical Trade Printer,' *The Library*, Fourth Series, X (1930), 121–62 and Tessa Watt, p. 289 and pp. 297–98.

influence. This was *The Old Wives Tale*, a play by George Peele, which was printed – interestingly enough by Danter – in 1595, a year by which, as I have suggested above, he could have known Middleton. Peele was one of the group of writers often referred to as the 'University Wits' (Lodge, Sidney, Lyly and Peele were all contemporaries at Oxford in the late 1570s, Greene was at Cambridge) who established drama as a modern literary form just before the advent of Shakespeare. The common ground between *Chinon* and *The Old Wives Tale* consists of a man who is turned into a bear, brothers in search of an enchanted sister, a wicked magician, two knights errant and a series of enchantments (in Middleton blindness, dumbness and madness, in Peele blindness, deafness and forgetfulness). If there are borrowings here they are solely at a superficial level but the correspondences are striking and it is interesting that the play must have been in Danter's shop at about the time that *Chinon* would have first come to him. Furthermore, if we can accept a line of influence here, it is significant that Peele's drama, although not drawn from specific medieval literary sources, does draw on a stratum of folk tale which was readily associated with the Middle Ages in the Elizabethan mind.

This detailed review of the influences and sources that fed into the composition of *Chinon of England* shows something of the complexity of medievalism in the late sixteenth century. Here we have a text which is, ostensibly, an exercise in pseudo-Arthurian romance but which also has links and possible links with Middle English chivalric narrative, the neo-chivalric courtly romances of the early Renaissance, late sixteenth-century popular narrative, the Peninsular romances, the Italian novella and dramatic comedy. It would be very easy to force Middleton into the mould of citizen writers like Johnson and Robarts or to argue that he was an incompetent version of Lodge. His sources show that he was certainly not trying to reform traditional chivalric material for a citizen readership. At the same time, a work like *Chinon,* is not, like *Rosalynde*, an exercise in courtly pastoral. The two texts are demonstrations of different types of medievalism and can be shown to have very specific motivations.

Middleton's medievalism is, essentially, a hybrid variety. He is trying to revitalise the medieval traditions of chivalric narrative which formed an ever-present, though insufficiently acknowledged, current in the cultural life of Elizabethan England. At the same time he is grafting onto them material which was designed for both the quasi-courtly and the popular reader. In this respect *Chinon* is a bizarre compendium of late Elizabethan taste and the uncertainties which seem to be present in the circumstances of its production are reflected in the rather contradictory evidence of its sources. It as if Middleton was

desperately trying to please everyone and the result, not surprisingly, is fairly chaotic. The fact that the work was not re-printed after 1597 shows that he failed. At the same time, it is significant that in attempting to write a book that would be of wide appeal Middleton opted for a chivalric romance. This choice shows just how important was the position of such texts in the Elizabethan consciousness. *Chinon* lacks interest as a text in itself precisely because Middleton does not seem to have had any coherent idea of the significance of his material or of his model reader. However, as a document for the study of medievalism in the English Renaissance, a text like *Chinon* is of great importance. Only by detailed study of such works and by critical analysis of the projected mentality of its authors can we begin to produce a full picture of the textures of Elizabethan literary culture and a history which gives adequate weight to the process of medievalism as a formative influence in any given period. This essay is designed as a modest contribution to that project.

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MEDIEVALISM AND THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS

BERNARD ROSENTHAL

ONE OF THE CENTRAL perceptions of the Salem Witch Trials is that they occurred at the intersection between a receding medieval past and an emerging enlightenment. This view is sharply expressed by Marion Starkey, who has been very influential in shaping popular and even historical perceptions of the events of 1692. Starkey writes that:

> During the witchcraft, and to some extent through the witchcraft, thinking people in Massachusetts passed over the watershed that divides the mystery and magic of late medieval thinking from the more rational climate of opinion referred to as 'the Enlightenment'.[1]

Indeed, it has not been uncommon, particularly in the nineteenth century, although in the twentieth century as well, to see in the Salem Witch Trials a kind of redemptive moment, an occasion when the wise people of Massachusetts saw their mistake and buried this medieval superstition not just for America but for the world.

In seeing this redemptive role of the Salem Witch Trials, Americans have of course continued the tradition begun by John Winthrop in his 'Model of Christian Charity' of seeing America as the redemptive force of the world. Without following that tangled line of inquiry, which takes us through the theology of Winthrop to the framing of the Constitution, to the creation of Emersonian myth in his essay *Nature*, and continuing on to modern times up to the movie *Independence Day*, it is enough here to say that two aspects of the Salem Witch Trials are of immediate concern in addressing their connection to what we have come to call 'medievalism'. One concerns the perception defined above by Starkey, and the other deals with the medievalism that is embedded within the framework she defines.

The first matter concerns the historical moment of 1692 and the intellectual climate of the time. On February 29, 1692, three women were brought into the legal system to answer charges of witchcraft leveled against them. These women, Tituba (the slave of the minister of Salem Village, Samuel Parris), Sarah Osborne, and Sarah Good, came before a judicial system that had a particular history behind it in

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[1] Marion L. Starkey, The Devil in Massachusetts: A Modern Enquiry into the Salem Witch Trials, 2nd edn (New York: Knopf, 1950).

dealing with witchcraft accusations. The legal precedents were numerous, and the judiciary in New England had dealt with witchcraft cases since early in the history of the colony. Prior to that there had been a whole history of English law to draw on, and a broad array of cases from the past. So the only unusual aspect of the arrest of these women, at least for Massachusetts Bay Colony, was that the accusation of witchcraft was a multiple one.

If the judicial system had treated these women as the system had treated those accused of witchcraft in the past, it is likely that we would not have had the Salem Witch Trials. However, instead of responding with traditional New England scepticism toward witchcraft allegations, the examining magistrates, John Hathorne and Jonathan Corwin, gave credence to the charges and from that moment to the end of the episode, essentially with the execution of eight people on September 22, 1692, the legal authorities encouraged accusations of witchcraft, encouraged perceptions of guilt, and became the engine that drove the trials as opposed to the restraining force that the legal system had been in the past when confronted with witchcraft charges.

The enthusiasm of the judiciary in supporting the witch trials may indeed have reflected the behaviour of a belief system making a last determined stand. Beyond any reasonable doubt, the reality of witchcraft was a contested issue in the seventeenth century. In 1677 John Webster had written his *The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft*,[2] and shortly afterward, in 1681, Joseph Glanvill's *Saducismus Triumphatus* had appeared.[3] These were not the only books in the seventeenth-century debate over witchcraft, but they serve emblematically in their views and in their proximity to 1692 to symbolize the intellectual climate of the times on witchcraft. Glanvill was insisting on its reality, while Webster was pointing to perceived absurdities and blasphemies in just such claims.

In the years that followed the learned world would come down unambiguously enough on the side of Webster, but in 1692 the outcome of the debate could not be predicted. Yet a tension already existed between the medieval and the modern that made the issue more complex than simply one of enlightenment versus superstition. And this brings us to the second matter indicated above, and to the core issue of medievalism as it applies in this discussion.

In Starkey's representation of the polarities between the superstitious and the rational world she refers to 'the watershed that

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[2] John Webster, *The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft* (London: n. pub., 1677).

[3] Joseph Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus, or, Full and plain evidence concerning witches and apparitions [...] and an authentick, but wonderful story of certain Swedish witches*, trans. by A. Horneck (London: Collins and Lownds, 1681).

divides the mystery and magic of late medieval thinking from the more rational climate of opinion referred to as "the Enlightenment"'. Inherent in this view, a very common one in our culture – indeed one that allows us the concept of 'medievalism' – is the assumption of a rupture between a period we define as 'Medieval' and one that we call 'Renaissance'. Yet as a practical matter such a distinction could not offer workable categories for Massachusetts Bay Colony as it confronted the witchcraft crisis of 1692. There was no rupture here, no clean break with the past, as of course there was none in the rest of western civilization. But the colony's entanglement with its 'witchcraft' issue reveals the force of 'medievalism' that was at work, as opposed to that which was 'medieval'.

Now one can get bogged down here in terminology, in categories very artificial. Yet to accept the premise of 'medievalism' is to accept a central distinction between a historical period – however much one may agree or disagree over the beginning and ending dates of it – and the evocation of that period through imagination. It is the latter that we regard as 'medievalism', and it is this aspect of the events of 1692 that primarily concerns us here.

The settlers of Massachusetts Bay were, by our normal division of historical periods, children of the Renaissance. 'Witchcraft' of course, did not disappear on whatever moment we may assume the Renaissance began, but between the medieval and the Catholic, as opposed to the Renaissance and the Protestant – that religious distinction being the real point of separation between the two 'periods'. Protestant, Renaissance New England was engaging the concept of witchcraft profoundly embedded in a medieval, Catholic, tradition, its immediate source in Protestant England notwithstanding. To make credible the claims of witchcraft, those in Massachusetts Bay Colony who supported the belief engaged a medieval past and transformed it into the medievalism that it became.

The heart of the problem of detecting witches had always been inherent in the crime of witchcraft. Here was an activity done in cooperation with the devil, whose powers allowed unnatural and undetectable things to occur. If a person is attacked by the apparition of a witch, or made to suffer by a spell that has been cast, how does one prove this? How does one confirm that the dying cow was bewitched and that a particular person could be held accountable? By definition one is dealing with that which is unamenable to normal rules of evidence. The problem and the solution were most famously and notoriously articulated by Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger who published, around 1486, the infamous *Malleus Maleficarum*, a work that went through more than sixteen editions, with one appearing as

late as 1669.[4]

There is much in this book to discuss – its astonishing misogyny and cruelty as a beginning point – but central to the issue here is in how the authors confront this vexing matter of exposing witchcraft. Recognizing the problem, recognizing the wiles of the devil, Kramer and Sprenger see the only solution to the matter as one of getting witches to confess. How to do this emerges as a primary topic of the *Malleus Maleficarum*, and (to condense radically this grotesque book), the answer is simply torture. How many people suffered the tortures outlined by these two men is out of reach, but the number is considerable. Horrible torture, or even the threat of it, served to extract confessions that sent people to their death. The method was effective. People admitted to witchcraft, and the admissions confirmed the initial assumption of its reality.

Whether through the direct influence of Kramer and Sprenger or not, the strategy of torture to elicit confession extended well into the seventeenth century, occurring in a series of witch trials needing further exploration in their connection to what happened in Massachusetts Bay Colony. These were the witch trials that occurred in Sweden from around 1669 to 1676, and their connection to the Salem Witch Trials has been admirably noted by E. William Monter.[5] Many aspects of these Swedish trials bear consideration in searching for connections to those in Massachusetts Bay, but of immediate concern here are two issues. One is this matter of torture to elicit confession, and the other concerns narratives of trips to witches' sabbaths.

On the matter of torture first, the Swedish trials remind us that such practices were not limited to the Middle Ages, nor to Catholic countries. Sweden did not seem to be as uncomfortable as Puritan Massachusetts Bay in juggling the new protestantism with the old practices of 'papistry'. The mother country of England had abandoned torture, and so too did the colony except in isolated cases and in relatively mild forms. But in eschewing torture, those running the Salem witch trials lacked the solution of the medieval past or the more recent Swedish precedent. If there is no torture, how is one to get a witch to confess?

Tituba the slave was beaten and confessed, but the nature of the beating and its timing relative to the confession remain unknown. Yet

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[4] Henricus Institoris and Jacobus Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum* (Nuremberg: Anton Korberger, 1494). There is a convenient English translation by Montague Summers (London: Pushkin, 1948, 2nd edn London: Hogarth, 1969).

[5] E. William Monter, 'Scandinavian Witchcraft in Anglo-American Perspective', in *Early Modern Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries*, ed. by Bengt Ankarloo and Gustav Henningsen (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), pp. 425–34.

extracting confessions by force was not the strategy, planned or inadvertent, that took shape in 1692. Rather, confessions were elicited by the spoken or unspoken promise that confession would buy time from the gallows. The bargain was made, and the bargain was kept. Thus, although getting there by another route, the people of Massachusetts Bay nevertheless returned to the medieval roots of witchcraft proceedings, and made confession the centerpiece of the judicial procedures concerning witchcraft. At their core, then, the proceedings can be seen as 'medieval'.

The counter to this is, of course, the relative absence of torture as practiced in the Middle Ages or in late seventeenth-century Sweden. Future generations in America would look back at the Salem witch trials and in popular imagination see them as a place where witches burned at the stake, here clearly representing the perspective of medievalism, of seeing the events as medieval. Yet even though no burnings occurred, the basic image of the process as medieval can be supported through the connection of confession as the means of revealing witchcraft. Yet the example of Sweden remains as something setting Massachusetts Bay apart, something arguing against the events as 'medieval', if torture becomes the defining characteristic.

But the matter of the medieval, or medievalism, becomes clearer in exploring the narratives of the Salem Witch Trials along with the chronology of the narrations. If we think of medievalism as a way of rendering the past, or even the present, as belonging to an imagined era of the middle ages, then the murkiness produced by issues of torture and confession fade, and the clarity of the medievalism emerges.

At the outset of the Salem Witch Trials, if we return to the end of February when the three women were ordered arrested, the stories that were told were strikingly limited. Those claiming to be hurt by those accused as witches were the 'afflicted'. And the afflicted had narrow, limited claims. The witches, they said were hurting them, torturing them – or as the indictments would subsequently say, 'pining, consuming, and wasting' them.[6] However, somewhere along the way the narrative structure of what was happening changed, and a new and significant element emerged. Stories of witches' sabbaths appeared.

The nature of these stories suggest that they were probably not directly picked up from narrative accounts of witches' sabbaths that were at the core of stories in the Swedish trials, but this is a matter that requires further investigation elsewhere. To the point here is that the stories told in Massachusetts Bay had shifted from simple accounts of

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[6] See Bernard Rosenthal, *Salem Story: Reading the Witch Trials of 1692* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 69.

abuse by witches to narratives of visits to places of demonic rites. Now to be accurate, it has to be noted that something of these visits was suggested at the outset when Tituba was asked 'how did you go' and answered, 'we ride upon stickes and are there presently'. Then she was asked, 'doe you goe through the trees or over them', and she answered 'we see no thing but are there presently'.[7] The line of questioning is not entirely clear from the surviving manuscript, and it is probable that something of the witches' sabbath idea was being pursued from the outset. But it did not stick, and only later in the episode did it clearly emerge.

The turning point of the community narration occurred on July 21 when a fifteen-year old girl named Mary Lacey, Jr. confessed to witchcraft and told an elaborate story of demonic rites, of the witches' sabbath. It is beyond the reach of scholarship, at least based on available evidence, to prove why this motif was introduced so late in the proceedings and gained such broad currency among confessors, but there is good circumstantial evidence to infer that newer, more dramatic stories were needed to keep the persecutions going. In his letter of October 8, 1692, Thomas Brattle, a fierce critic of the judicial proceedings, notes the frequency of claims of demonic rites and the importance attached to them by 'the S.G. [Salem Gentlemen] and some others [...]' in defending the trials.[8] By the time these stories were being told, the center of the episode had shifted from Salem Village to Andover, and confessions were increasing dramatically, often through family pressure to avoid the gallows. And scepticism about the validity of the judicial proceedings was growing.

It would oversimplify matters to say that the stories of witches' sabbaths flowered only because of the growing scepticism over the judicial proceedings, for there were indeed other reasons also. But for the matter at hand, the key point is that such narrations were being used as a defense of the proceedings and indeed were used to defend them in the most prominent work to emerge from the whole episode, Cotton Mather's *Wonders of the Invisible World*. Written in the fall of 1692, Mather's narrative vividly points to the demonic rites:

> The Devil which then thus imitated what was in the Church of the Old Testament, now among Us would Imitate the Affayrs of the Church in the New. The Witches do say, that they form themselves much after the

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[7] The Salem Witchcraft Papers: Verbatim Transcripts of the Legal Documents of the Salem Witchcraft Outbreak of 1692, ed. by Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, 3 vols (New York: DaCapo, 1977), III, 749.

[8] *Narratives of the Witchcraft Cases 1648–1706*, ed. by George Lincoln Burr (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914), p. 189.

> manner of Congregational Churches; and that they have a Baptism and a Supper, and Officers among them, abominably Resembling those of our Lord.[9]

Mather looked widely for material that would support his defence, so to highlight the witches' sabbath risks distorting the nature of that defence. At the same time, the prominence of the issue at the time, as manifested in the narratives of confessors, and as pointed to by Brattle (see note 8 above), compels us to observe that more than half way through the crisis, those supporting the activities of the proceedings turned to a medieval past to find in its fictions the stories that would justify what was happening in the present. This may be the first occurrence of medievalism in American history. If not, it is certainly one of the earliest.

Here is narrative and nothing else, for there is no substance to the claims of the sabbaths, no evidence that any ever occurred in the tales told in Massachusetts Bay colony, tales retrieved from a medieval past to justify a contemporary legal policy. There remains the possibility, of course, that the route by which these stories reached Massachusetts Bay went through Sweden, but even if that proves to be the case, the narrative remains an alien one to the English tradition of witchcraft accusation. To be sure, one may reasonably argue that all witchcraft stories grow from the medieval, but a real distinction remains between the conscious and invented use of narrative rooted in the middle ages and stories indigenous to local traditions of witchcraft.

Yet this medievalism of Massachusetts Bay colony, or at least of those who supported the witchcraft persecutions offers the beginning and not the end of the connection between the witch trials and the association of them with the medieval that future generations would perceive. As indicated above, the popular view of the Salem witch trials imagines women burning at the stake. It also imagines real witchcraft having occurred in 1692 with witches as some kind of persecuted minority of the time. What makes this view a 'medieval' vision is that perception discussed at the outset of this essay of a dividing line between a rational modern world and an irrational medieval one. To the latter belong the images of burning – perhaps from our cultural memory of Joan of Arc. But more deeply embedded there is the association with ignorance, with a pre-rational world, a world where magic, real or imagined, can find a place in our view of the time before reason. But even as we frame this image within our culture, the seductive image of a world containing fantasy, even arrayed in images

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[9] Mather, *The Wonders of the Invisible World* (Boston: Samuel Phillips, 1693), cited here from Burr, *Narratives*, pp. 245–6.

of horror, lures us to it. Thus, to return to the quotation from Starkey given above, the very language by which we normally discuss the Salem witch trials evokes a world where witchcraft is a reality. Notice the choice of words: 'During the witchcraft, and to some extent through the witchcraft, thinking people in Massachusetts passed over the watershed [...].'

What 'witchcraft' does Starkey have in mind? Her study, and this example from it, has been particularly chosen here because of the popularity of her book over the years, and because it has legitimate claims as a work of history and as a work of fiction. It is hard to guess whether Starkey's book or Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, which probably drew from Starkey, has been most influential in shaping popular images of the episode. If one cannot assume Starkey's belief in the reality of witchcraft at Salem, the task is easier with Miller. 'I have no doubt', he writes:

> that people *were* communing with, and even worshipping the devil in Salem, and if the whole truth could be known in this case, as it is in others, we should discover a regular and conventionalized propitiation of the dark spirit. One certain evidence of this is the confession of Tituba, the slave of Reverend Parris, and another is the behavior of the children who were known to have indulged in sorceries with her. (Act 1)[10]

Although there is no way to prove that Miller's confidence is misplaced, no evidence exists to support his version of Tituba and sorcery, a view held by Starkey and generations of people who have scapegoated Tituba by perpetuating the tale, invented in the nineteenth century, of Tituba's dabbling in magic.[11]

But if Arthur Miller, of all people, can be seduced into the 'where there is smoke there is fire' way of looking at the Salem witch trials, do we indeed wonder that such a view, created out of whole cloth, can be so broadly endorsed? At issue here is not the gullibility of a great playwright in one instance, but rather the persistent impulse in our culture to turn the Salem tragedy into a medieval battleground where witchcraft is a reality. Thus, the episode whose participants in authority drew on the medieval to justify their actions has continued in American history to be viewed, for the most part, in the real or imagined terrain of a malign medieval world. That is the place, after all, where witches live.

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[10] Arthur Miller, *The Crucible* (1952, repr. Oxford: Heinemann, 1992), p. 29.

[11] For a discussion of this issue, see Rosenthal, *Salem Story*, p. 10ff.

ABSENT PRESENCE: THE ROMANTIC-ERA MAGNA CHARTA AND THE ENGLISH CONSTITUTION

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> What was Magna Charta? A bill, or act of parliament, granting the barons and citizens greater privileges than they had ever enjoyed before. By this act, the obligation of the feudal law was abolished, and English freedom restored. (*Mangnall's Historical Questions*, 1800)[1]

THE STORY GOES THAT when in 1810 officers broke into Sir Francis Burdett's house to arrest him for libelling the House of Commons, he was discovered teaching his fourteen-year-old son to translate Magna Charta.[2] The radical member of Parliament for the democratic constituency of Westminster had incurred the wrath of the House of Commons because he argued that by imprisoning John Gale Jones, a critic of the government, they had acted illegally against the constitution.

The obvious problem with both Burdett's charge and Parliament's indignation at it is that England does not actually have a documented constitution. English law is based not on a written document like the American Constitution, but rather on precedent: that is, it is by nature dependent upon rereading a past that extends back into the mysterious depths of the Middle Ages. While legal commentators differed as where this past originated, some ascribing to a theory of 'immemorialism' in that certain legal practices had been English legal practice longer than it was possible to remember; and others preferring the theory of 'Saxonism', where English law was the product of Saxon traditions originating from the Germanic tribes, both models locate the origin of English legal practice in the non-classical past that can be broadly defined as medieval.[3]

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[1] Richmond Mangnall, *Historical and Miscellaneous Questions for the Use of Young People*, new edition (London: Longman, 1830).

[2] I am following the spelling used during this period, rather than the classical Latin form *Magna Carta*, to avoid confusion.

[3] Saxonism can be subdivided into those who stressed the pattern of virtue suggested by Tacitus in *Germania*; and those who saw English law as established by Christian English Saxons, most notably Alfred the Great. See also J. G. A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), pp. 36–44. I am aware that during this time period, the early Middle Ages were were

Burdett tacitly acknowledged the absence of the constitution by associating his actions with Magna Charta, one of the only documentary statements of English right.[4] In this and other contemporary references, no article is used – not the Magna Carta, but Magna Charta, a law-Latin form. The explanation of this usage, that Latin does not have articles, is surely inadequate. The form proclaims Magna Carta a concept as much as an object. The role of Magna Charta as constitutional evidence in English political discourse during the period between the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789 and the so-called Peterloo Massacre of 1819 might thus be interpreted as a microcosm of medievalism. Medievalism posits an actual medieval past, but is more concerned with the implications of that past for the present. For the English constitution, Magna Charta is a verifiable medieval survival, yet its significance is firmly in the present in determining the nature of civil and political right.

In this essay, I wish to explore how the absent, the English constitution, can be represented not merely in political but also in literary discourse, and especially how Magna Charta becomes a powerful presence that embodies the centrality of the past to English national identity. It is easy to characterize medievalism as paternalist in seeking to preserve social structures: I hope to demonstrate here that a desire to change perceived injustice, and particularly the relationships between economic classes, can also be justified as part of a national inheritance from medieval times. My main examples are the arrest of Sir Francis Burdett in 1810 and Shelley's poem 'The Mask of Anarchy', written in 1819; these, I would suggest, demonstrate that while Burdett consciously appealed to medieval tradition, even Shelley, whose view of right appears at first sight to be ahistorical, cannot escape from the shadow of the past. First, though, I shall contextualize the discussion informing both these works, namely the revival of interest in the origins of English law, and the ways in which this debate loaded Magna Charta with meaning.

The Great Charter is, of course, the document signed by King John in 1215, and hence its medieval status is unimpeachable. The thirty-seven provisions granted by John to the barons suggest that the king (or the government) is not above the law. At least from a post-Reformation perspective, two provisions in particular were interpreted as bulwarks of the English constitution. First, the Charter declares that

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generally defined as the 'Dark Ages'; yet to suggest that period as the origin of English law was to attribute to it considerable enlightenment.

[4] I use the word 'English' rather than 'British' here in that law was seen as a specifically English inheritance, the Scottish legal tradition, for example, being significantly different.

'the Church of England shall be free, and have her whole rights and liberties inviolable', and goes on to confirm the liberties 'to all the freemen of our realm, for us and for our Heirs for ever'.[5] Second, the famous Chapter 29 reads:

> No Freeman shall be taken, or imprisoned, or be disseised of his Freehold, or Liberties, or free Customs, or be outlawed, or exiled, or any otherwise destroyed; nor will we pass upon him, nor condemn him, but by lawful Judgment of his Peers, or by the Law of the Land.

Magna Charta, then, asserts rights and freedoms. Yet although the medieval authenticity of Magna Charta was not in doubt, more in question was whether the document established liberties, or merely stated pre-existing ones. In the words of David Hume, for example:

> This famous deed, commonly called the GREAT CHARTER, either granted or secured very important liberties and privileges to every order of men in the kingdom; to the clergy, to the barons, and to the people.[6]

If the liberties were granted, they would be new; if secured, they would be pre-existing. Magna Charta itself points both forward and backwards in time in its concluding chapter, which begins:

> Escuage from henceforth shall be taken like it was wont to be in the time of King Henry our Grandfather; reserving to all Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots, Priors, Templers, Hospitallers, Earls, Barons, and all persons, as well Spiritual as Temporal, all their free liberties and free Customs, which they have had in time passed. And all these Customs and Liberties aforesaid, which we have granted to be holden within this our Realm, as much as appertaineth to us and our Heirs, we shall observe [...].[7]

The question of how new was Magna Charta – that is, whether it was a legal innovation or merely the restatement of Common Law – haunts all discussion from the time of Hume onwards.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, Magna Charta had achieved a new accessibility. During the many political upheavals of the seventeenth century, the charter had been repeatedly cited as, in the words of Sir Edward Coke, 'declaratory of the principal grounds of

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[5] See Anne Pallister, *Magna Carta, The Heritage of Liberty* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), p. 108.

[6] David Hume, *History of England*, 16 vols (1754–62; London: Washbourne, 1844), II, 117.

[7] Quoted in Pallister, p. 120.

the fundamental laws of England',[8] notably in the Petition of Right against Charles I in 1628, and the Declaration of Rights in the reign of William and Mary. It was, however, only available in very limited printed sources, and under the Georges, it dropped from political discussion.

Then in the 1750s, William Blackstone made an attempt to collate the different editions and produce a usable text. Blackstone published his edition in 1759, the same year that the two best-known surviving copies of the charter from the astonishing manuscript collection of Sir Robert Cotton since the sixteenth century, became part of the holdings of the new British Museum: in two different ways, then, 1759 reestablished Magna Charta as national property.

Up to this point, Blackstone noted, the best available sources were Tyrrel's edition from 'Matthew Paris's copy', and John Pine's engraved edition (a work of some importance, since Pine had made his engraving the copy damaged in the Cottonian fire of 1731). Blackstone believed the copy used by the thirteenth-century historian Matthew Paris was at Salisbury Cathedral, 'but, upon diligent inquiry made of that cathedral in April AD 1759, nothing of that sort could be found'.[9]

For Blackstone, this carelessness with the document, reflected also in the story that Sir Robert Cotton found one of his copies in a tailor's shop, indicates the low value that England places on its legal tradition. His edition thus seeks to situate Magna Charta not merely as artifact, but as the embodiment of a more ancient tradition:

> for it is agreed by all our historians that the great charter of King John was for the most part compiled from the antient customs of the realm; or the laws of King Edward the confessor; by which they usually mean the old common law, which was established under our saxon princes, before the rigors of feodal tenure, and other hardships were imported from the continent by the kings of the norman line. But the immediate occasion of demanding a restitution and confirmation of these liberties, at this particular time, is somewhat difficult to be known. (p. xii)

Blackstone hence goes farther than Hume in claiming Magna Charta as restored liberties, and from this point onwards, the significance of the charter in constitutional discussion increased.

Ten years later, an edition most likely printed by the supporters of the democratic ideas of John Wilkes made even more elaborate claims for the ancient rights embodied in the Charter. The anonymous author

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[8] Quoted in Pallister, p. 3.

[9] *Magna Charta*, ed. by Sir William Blackstone (London, 1759), pp. xxvii–xxviii.

of *A History and Defence of Magna Charta* (1769) argues that England had always been democratic:

> Though it is very difficult to trace the first rudiments of policy and laws established in England, yet we have the greatest reason to believe, that the natives, even in the earliest ages, were divided into small communities, in which a kind of democracy had the ascendant.[10]

For this commentator, then, even the Ancient Britons were democratic, a practice reinforced by the Saxon invasions:

> To the characters of conquerors, these people [the Saxons] were ambitious to add that of legislators: and there is very good reason to believe that many of the laws which remain in force even of this day, are the same which were brought from the northern parts of Germany by the Saxon invaders. (p. ii)

The recurring phrase 'reason to believe' used in the 'Introductory Discourse' is strengthened in the 'History and Defence of Magna Charta' that follows:

> The contents of Magna Charta is [sic] the undoubted inheritance of England, being their antient and approved laws; so antient, that they seem to be of the same standing with the nation [...]. (pp. 3–4)

For this writer, it is clearly important to argue that the rights were not granted by a monarch, but merely confirmed by him as the tradition of the nation: 'if the obscure birth of Magna Charta was in K. John's time, it was then born with a grey beard, for it was in being in his great grandfather's time' (p. 4). The edition that follows poses some questions. Magna Charta is a Latin document, yet the text given, 'translated for the benefit of common readers', is said to be a 'true copy from the original French" (p. 183). It nevertheless provides an early instance of the democratic strain in medievalism that was to become common during the French Revolutionary period.

At the outbreak of the French Revolution, at first sight, English medievalism seems to align itself against constitutional change, particularly in the interpretation of the past. In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Edmund Burke famously lamented the loss of medieval values when he proclaimed that 'the age of chivalry is gone'.[11] Burke's objective is to make the French Revolution seem

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[10] *A History and Defence of Magna Charta* (London, 1769), p. i.

[11] Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790; London: Dutton, 1922), p. 73.

contrary to all precedent, a new and unique phenomenon in history. His reason for doing so, however, is that supporters of the Revolution had justified their position on the grounds of historical precedent. While Burke pays most attention to attacking the use of the 1688 Revolution in these debates, he is also obliged to respond to arguments concerning medieval common law. Thus in denying the similarities between the 'Glorious' Revolution of 1688 and the French Revolution of 1789, he claims that the English Revolution 'was made to preserve our *ancient* indisputable laws and liberties, and that *ancient* constitution of government which is our only security for law and liberty' (p. 29). Magna Charta is hence characterized as 'our oldest reformation'. Burke notes that Coke and Blackstone

> endeavour to prove, that the ancient charter, the Magna Charta of King John, was connected with another positive charter from Henry I, and that both the one and the other were nothing more than a reaffirmance of the still more ancient standing law of the kingdom. In the matter of fact, for the greater part, these authors appear to be in the right; perhaps not always; but if the lawyers mistake in some particulars, it proves my position still the more strongly; because it demonstrates the powerful prepossession towards antiquity, with which the minds of our lawyers and legislators, and all of the people whom they wish to influence, have always been filled; and the stationary policy of this kingdom in considering their most sacred rights and franchises as an *inheritance*. (pp. 29–30)

Burke's awkward concession here that not merely legal historians but also the English people in general value the idea of an ancient inheritance means that he cannot entirely claim that English radicals reject tradition; he can only argue that their conception of English historical tradition is wrong.

The inability of the English to escape the medieval is demonstrated in the writings of Thomas Paine, perhaps the most extreme arguer against the force of precedent that Burke claimed as the basis of English law. Paine scoffed at Burke's idea of the constitution, asserting that, contrary to the situation in the American States, 'in England, it is not difficult to perceive that every thing has a constitution, except the nation'.[12] In *The Rights of Man*, written in response to Burke's *Reflections*, he argues that 'no such thing as a constitution exists in England' because 'a constitution is a thing antecedent to the government, and always distinct therefrom' (pp. 381–382). Paine's idea of the people making a constitution, as had been done in the United States and France, is a conscious attempt to break from

[12] Thomas Paine, *Complete Writings* (New York: Citadel Press, 1945), p. 382.

historical precedent. Yet the arguments that follow, including Paine's attack on Magna Charta, still cannot escape historicizing national identity. Paine writes:

> If we begin with William of Normandy, we find that the government of England was originally a tyranny, founded on an invasion and conquest of the country. This being admitted, it will then appear, that the exertion of the nation, at different periods, to abate that tyranny, and render it less intolerable, has been credited for a constitution. Magna Charta, as it was called, (it is now like an almanac of the same date), was no more than compelling the Government to renounce a part of its assumptions. It did not create and giver powers to Government in the manner a constitution does; but was, as far as it went, of the nature of a re-conquest, and not of a constitution; for could the nation have totally expelled the usurpation, as France has done its depostism, it would then have had a constitution in form. (pp. 382–83)

Paine's criticism of Magna Charta as not a true constitution and as outdated as an old calendar partially disguises the fact that he continues to make the historical assumption that the Norman Conquest was a 'usurpation' in taking away ancient freedoms. While Paine would probably have countered that in pre-Norman times, English society functioned in a way closer to natural law, he is, like many more consciously medievalist democrats, ascribing to Saxon England a truer sense of freedom than at any time subsequent. If Magna Charta is a 're-conquest', it not only conquers the conquering Normans, but would seem to be claiming back pre-existing right.

That Paine is often claimed as an American, or even as a French citizen, may be a telling point: Paine could not escape the Middle Ages except by leaving England, and most English democrats were far more deliberate in their association of the medieval past with English constitutionalism. In the early years of the nineteenth century, when habeas corpus, the right seen as embodied in Chapter 29, was repeatedly suspended, Magna Charta became even more a tool for argumentation. The right to be freed if not charged with an offense against the law is known as *habeas corpus*, but ironically, in using statute to rescind it, the government was giving the common-law right of 'having your body' a body that it itself had not had, except through Magna Charta.

For not merely the constitution, but even Magna Charta itself, remained largely conspicuous through its absence. Although Blackstone had claimed to be making the text more accessible, it was still not available to the unpropertied classes, yet radicals of this period began to claim its relevance to their concerns. Cheap English translations started to appear about the time the affair of Sir Francis Burdett.

In 1810, for example, B. Curwen edited a cheap edition printed by Sherwood, Neeley and Jones which claimed to be 'translated from an authentic copy of Magna Charta, deposited in the Library of the British Museum'. In fact, the text appears to have been produced not from the original but from the seventeenth-century edition of Matthew Paris, so the reference to the British Museum functions as a means of emphasizing the national ownership of the text.

About the same time John Fairburn produced a one-shilling edition with an epigraph from Coke, 'Magna fuit quondam Magnae reverentia Chartae' (Once upon a time, reverence for the Great Charter was great). The text is the same as that in D. Deane's *Magna Charta, The Bills of Rights; With the Petition of Right* (1815), although the notes have been re-edited. Deane's edition repeats two significant errors of Fairburn's edition. Both give the date of the Bill of Rights as 1682 rather than 1628, which suggests very little historical awareness on the part of the editors. Moreover, both editions assert that the Cottonian Library is at Oxford, so once again, the text is not derived from the British Museum copies.

Francis Burdett, then, was astute in observing that an appeal to the Magna Charta was an appeal to the politically aware members of the disenfranchized classes, and the events that followed reveal how well Burdett was able to touch the emotions of his supporters. In his address to his constituents that had so inflamed the government, the thesis is neatly contained in the opening sentence:

> Gentlemen: The House of Commons has passed a Vote, which amounts to a declaration, that an Order of theirs is to be of more weight than Magna Charta and the Laws of the Land.

Burdett is, of course, alluding to Chapter 29 and habeas corpus, and the provisions that the government is not to be above the laws of the land. Burdett goes on to describe Magna Charta as 'the Great Charter of our Rights and Liberties': that is, as he had also declared in a long speech in the Commons, the England constitution consists of traditional rights, but the Magna Carta is one of the key documents that articulates them. The address was published in perhaps the supreme organ for the radical laboring classes of this era, William Cobbett's *Political Register*: Cobbett, also an ardent admirer of Magna Charta, added an epigraph from Blackstone on the document, and insisted that 'no lawyer in England' could be of the opinion that people can be imprisoned without cause.[13]

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[13] William Cobbett, *Political Register*, 24 March 1810.

The government was nevertheless determined to imprison Burdett for libel. Burdett avoided his arrest for four days, and by the time that the exasperated Serjeant-at-Arms broke into his house, a crowd of four thousand was gathered outside. It was thus appropriate that he should be teaching his son the elements of English liberty, and this is how Cobbett depicted him in his 1817 series of articles *The Last Hundred Days of English Freedom*, an attack on yet another suspension of *habeas corpus*. The very earliest accounts of this scene, however, including those in Cobbett's *Political Register*, do not mention him teaching his son Magna Charta. Cobbett's *History of the Last Hundred Days of English Freedom*, serialized in the *Political Register* during 1817, states in an attack on Burdett's son Robert, who against his father's declared principles was an officer in the standing army,

> This very young man, when six years younger, saw his father dragged from his house, and escorted to the Tower, by a part of this very Standing Army. Nay, the youth himself accompanied the father in same coach on that memorable occasion. We were, at that time told, in the public prints, that, at the moment when the soldiers forced the doors of the house, SIR FRANCIS was standing *reading Magna Charta* to his son *in Latin*!

Cobbett's reference to 'public prints' rather than to first-hand knowledge at a time when he was in direct communication with Burdett leaves two main possibilities. Either Burdett successfully stage-managed his arrest so that, like the Wilkesite lawyer and journalist Arthur Beardmore fifty years before him, he could be depicted passing from father to son the tradition of rights.[14] Alternatively, he and his allies only thought of it after the event, and contrived to add this incident to his role as a hero simultaneously patriotic and paternal. The Cruikshank family produced a print showing Burdett's son, who appears a very small lad for a fourteen-year-old, holding a copy of Magna Charta as the arrest takes place.[15] The engraving was published as the frontispiece to an account of Burdett's arrest published by Henry Fairburn. Since Fairburn was also the publisher of one of the cheap editions of Magna Charta, the possibility arises that this could be an ingenious early example of product placement: the scene nevertheless becomes part of the myth of radical liberty.

As M. Dorothy George has observed, for a short while (Burdett was later to lose favor with his radical friends by retreating from his

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[14] In her valuable study of the reception history of *Magna Carta*, Anne Pallister points out that the Wilkesite lawyer Arthur Beardmore had himself painted in a similar pose with his young son in the 1760s (p. 60).

[15] The engraving was done at a time of transition between Isaac and George Cruikshank – another interesting father and son pairing.

support for universal suffrage), many prints and articles of the time portray Burdett in contrast with his eighteenth-century forerunner John Wilkes as the upholder of paternal family values and good-hearted English father.[16] In a new model for paternalism, Burdett was the father of the nation, who taught his children freedom. Reading Magna Charta, indeed, was presented as a social duty, Curwen noting in the Introduction his 1810 edition that

> surely no one will be hardy enough to contend, that this is not the time to put into the hands of the People a copy of that Charter which asserts their Rights, maintains their Privileges, and protects their Liberty. No family indeed ought to be with out it, and the rising generation should be instructed in the contents of its various articles. In short, it should make a part of the education of youth.

That the actual historicity of Burdett's story remains in doubt is not unfitting, since another Romantic-era interpretation hints at Magna Charta as the textual embodiment of the definitively unwritten, the English constitution. This might seem likely to be a concern of intellectual radicalism rather than that of the laboring classes: that is, a class that had never held power might be expected not to wish to appeal to traditional legal structure, but to follow Paine's lead in demanding a constitution that had never yet existed. The contrast is hence between natural right (following Rousseau's claim that all humans have inherent rights) and traditional right (the repeated English claim that rights had existed in the past, but that repressive governments had eroded those rights). Yet the two positions are not always diametrically opposed. Legal theorists who accepted English traditionalism generally argued that in its earliest state, presumably during the Saxon era, English Common Law was in fact natural law: in the words of Sir William Blackstone used by Cobbett's *Political Register* as an epigraph to its report of Burdett's address, 'Personal liberty is a natural inherent right'.[17] A difference may be marked from Rousseau's theory of liberty, however, in that Blackstone immediately proceeds to historicize this right as 'a doctrine co-eval with the first

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[16] See M. Dorothy George, *English Political Caricatures. A Study of Opinion and Propaganda*, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1959), II, p. 126.

[17] The first edition actually reads: 'In a former part of these commentaries we expatiated at large on the personal liberty of the subject. It was shewn to be a natural inherent right, which could not be surrendered or forfeited unless by commission of some great or atrocious crime, nor ought to be abridged in any case without the special permission of law. A doctrine co-eval with the first rudiments of the English constitution [...]'. Sir William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 3 vols (London, 1765–79), III, p. 133.

rudiments of the English constitution, and handed down to us from our Saxon ancestors', and finally 'established on the firmest basis by the provisions of Magna Charta'.

English radical idealism hence reflects both a spoken contempt for historical precedent on the basis that just law is yet to be created and a contradictory acknowledgment that the 'old' law of England, now undermined by the 'Bloody Code' of repressive law that had developed over the course of the eighteenth century, might be worth recapturing.[18] Try as they might, English intellectual radicals could not escape the force of legal precedent, and hence as they grappled with the future unwritten, a state of justice yet to be achieved, their writing paradoxically depended upon the past unwritten, the English Constitution.

Some of the discontents post-1815 years had been expressed in William Hone's *Political House That Jack Built*, first issued with illustrations by George Cruikshank in 1818. For Hone, Magna Charta was a key part of the 'wealth' that comprised the English Commonwealth: one of the engravings depicts a treasure chest containing habeas corpus, the Bill of Rights, and of course Magna Charta.[19] Opposed to this is a depiction of the Temple of the Constitution on the left – remarkably airy and empty, with the tag from William Cowper, 'A distant age asks where the fabric stood.' The reference is to Cowper's 1785 poem *The Task*, where the narrator notes the decline in public conscience of England's 'champions', whereas

> Such were not they of old, whose temper'd blades
> Dispers'd the shackles of usurp'd controul,
> And hew'd them link from link.

Cowper's primary allusion is to the time of the English Civil War, but he goes on to mention the 'old castle of the state', and Hone at least saw a reference to the constitution in the lines:

> The deep foundations that we lay,
> Time ploughs them up, and not a trace remains.
> We build with what we deem eternal rock,
> A distant age asks where the fabric stood,
> And in the dust sifted and search'd in vain,

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[18] On the 'Bloody Code', see, for example, Frank McLynn, *Crime and Punishment in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. ix–xvi.

[19] Reprinted in Edgell Rickwood's *Radical Squibs and Loyal Ripostes* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1971), pp. 39–58.

The undiscoverable secret sleeps.[20]

This historical dilemma manifests itself in a poem written by an intellectual radical but intended for an audience of the unenfranchised classes. In Percy Shelley's 'The Mask of Anarchy', the current state of English law is characterized as the figure of Anarchy, who like the yeoman cavalry at the notorious Peterloo Massacre of 1819 that inspired the poem, tramples on the poor, wearing on his brow the words, 'I AM GOD, AND KING, AND LAW!'[21]

In August 1819 a peaceful political rally at St. Peter's Fields, Manchester, had caused the local militia to panic; about eleven people were trampled to death by the horses or shot or sabred, and at least two hundred others were injured. The incident caused outrage in radical circles. Four years after English freedom had supposedly been preserved by the Battle of Waterloo, the majority of English were still unenfranchized, and now some of them were the victims of England's own army, some of whom were Waterloo veterans: hence this incident became mockingly known as the Peterloo Massacre. To make matters worse, the monarchy identified itself with such actions against the people when the Prince Regent officially thanked the yeomanry for carrying out their duties.

Hence Shelley, in describing the current state of law as Anarchy, was following Hone in a literary-political tradition in which absence is, or should be, a force. Yet Shelley's characterisation of English law as a negative, or not-law, prompts the question of what for him the positive, or ideal law, would be. Shelley's ideal is usually stated to be natural liberty as conceptualized by Rousseau, under which human beings are assumed to have innate rights. The poem itself, however, seems simultaneously to juxtapose the present Anarchy against previously-existing English law – a strange irony, since the principal critique of the state of English law at this time was that the traditional English Common-Law, itself a non-law in being not written down, had been in many cases replaced by statute law, those repressive laws passed by Parliament. As Hope lies down before the horses of 'Murder, Fraud, and Anarchy', a shadowy 'Shape arrayed in mail' appears:

With step as soft as wind it passed
O'er the heads of men – so fast
That they knew the presence there,
And looked, – but all was empty air. (p. 340)

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[20] William Cowper, *The Task, and Selected Other Poems*, ed. by James Sambrook (London: Longman, 1994), p. 183.

[21] Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Poetical Works*, ed. by Thomas Hutchinson, new edition (London: Oxford University Press), p. 339.

The Shape has been seen by most commentators as a Spirit of Liberty,[22] yet the fact that it is 'arrayed in mail' historicizes this liberty. I would hence suggest that a Shape clad in medieval garb replicates the Constitution in having a presence, but being unseeable as it passes by. The Shape prompts 'Thoughts' that slay Anarchy and give Hope new life. Feelings are followed by words:

> A rushing light of clouds and splendour,
> A sense awakening and yet tender
> Was heard and felt – and to its close
> These words of joy and fear arose
>
> As if their own indignant Earth
> Which gave the Sons of England birth
> Had felt their blood upon her brow,
> And shuddering with a mother's throe
>
> Had turned every drop of blood
> By which her face had been bedewed
> To an accent unwithstood –
> As if her heart had cried aloud [...].

These lines pose the problem of who is actually speaking. Michael Scrivener, for example, suggests that they are 'spoken by a maternal spirit, probably Britannia';[23] other commentators stress the reference to Mother Earth, although Shelley's construction is hypothetical, 'as if' Earth had spoken. The best solution may be to identify the words closely with the Shape, or the feelings prompted by the Shape, as an inherently English sense of the inheritance from the past.

The fifty-six stanzas that follow in a national call to revolution nevertheless appear from nowhere, 'as if' uttered by the Earth, spattered with the blood of the English. The inspiration of the Shape necessitates that concepts of freedom are most powerful in unuttered form – yet if they are unuttered, their actual existence remains in doubt. The question of whether the real is the material continues as the call to arms to the 'Men of England, heirs of Glory' mentions

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[22] *The Mask of Anarchy Draft Notebook*, ed. by Mary A. Quinn from Huntington HM 2177 (New York: Garland, 1990), reveals the struggles Shelley had with this section (pp. 54–57), but demonstrates that in his thinking, the Shape and the long speech go closely together. Steven E. Jones has a useful discussion of the Shape in *Shelley's Satire: Violence, Exhortation and Authority* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994), pp. 111–13.

[23] Michael Henry Scrivener, *Radical Shelley* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 205.

> Paper coin – that forgery
> Of the title-deeds, which ye
> Hold to something of the worth
> Of the inheritance of the Earth (p. 341)

The immediate reference is, of course, to paper money – yet paper money indicates a Government that rules through paper law, which may be opposed to

> The old laws of England – they
> Whose reverend heads with age are gray,
> Children of a wiser day:
> And whose solemn voice must be
> Thine own echo – Liberty! (p. 344)

The irony here is that 'The Mask of Anarchy', although a topical poem in being, as its subtitle states, 'Written on the Occasion of the Massacre at Manchester', itself remained unuttered. Shelley wrote this poem after reading accounts of the incident in John and Leigh Hunt's *Examiner*, and his language choices echo the Hunt's initial condemnation of the actions of 'the [Parliamentary] seat-selling violators of the British Constitution' and 'these Men in the Brazen Masks of power'.[24] The following week, the editorial quotes Magna Charta as part of a legitimate history of resistance to government erosions of right. All commentators note that Peterloo caused the death not only of men but also of women and children, and Shelley would also have been able to read in the *Examiner* a reprint of a letter by Sir Francis Burdett where he likens the yeomanry's actions not to an English medieval past but a despotic classical past in the attack on the maternal: English patriots, Burdett insists, 'can never stand tamely by, as lookers on, whilst bloody Neroes rip open their mother's womb'.

In writing 'The Mask of Anarchy' specifically for the Examiner, Shelley thus enters into the community of radical language and ideas. Probably correctly, however, the Hunts surmised that publishing it would land them in even more trouble with the law, of which by 1819 they had already had plenty. The Hunts' decision not to print the poem indicates that they believed that it would be read by the Government as an inflammatory appeal to the laboring classes, and certainly Shelley seems to be addressing the poor directly. I personally suspect that the influence of Rousseau on English democratic thinking has been overemphasized even in the case of the most consciously theoretical Romantic-era thinkers such as Shelley. What is most clear,

[24] John and Leigh Hunt, eds., *Examiner*, 22 August 1819.

though, is that when addressing an audience characterized as the labouring poor, Shelley does not simply address a never-yet achieved state of society, yet refers repeatedly to the past. Hope claims herself to be the only surviving daughter of an enfeebled father Time. Moreover, the constitutional structure proposed by the Shape is 'Let a great Assembly be/ Of the fearless and the free', an idea that recalls Athenian democracy, but also repeats the belief of popular democrats such as Major John Cartwright that Saxon England was governed by the folcmote, or democratic assembly, and that the true route to English freedom is at the same time forward and backwards.

One feature, however, sets 'The Mask of Anarchy' apart from popular discourse on the tradition of law. The constituencies of Middlesex and Westminster were democracies in the sense that all men had votes, but obviously, no women did. As we have seen, Burdett's gesture with Magna Charta suggests that the law is a tradition passed down from father to son. In contrast, Shelley's use of the feminine in this poem is in keeping with the tradition of the masque in presenting abstractions in female form. Hope, admittedly, is rather solid for an abstraction as she places her body before Anarchy's horse, but the Shape and the voice, like Magna Carta itself (or herself) are vaguely female. Probably, Shelley is more concerned with abstract than with actual females, since he returns to the usual convention in the unspoken address to 'Men of England, heirs of glory', which reinforces the connection of traditional right with the masculine line.

That the 'Men of England, heirs of glory' are 'Heroes of unwritten story' makes sense in terms of the way that working-class radicals chose to think about the constitution, and about history. The myth of English freedom poses an alternative past that standard histories chose to overlook, and the textual empowerment enshrined in Magna Charta and employed by working-class radical reformers and those who, like Burdett and Shelley, chose to speak with and for them, was an important source of hope for change back to the old ways. Hardly surprisingly, the grassroots radical reformers of the next generation again appealed to the medieval past by naming themselves the Chartists, and when they called for constitutional change, they asked for it in writing.

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

THE SWANSCOMBE LEGEND AND THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF KENTISH GAVELKIND

R. J. SMITH

THE ONLY KNOWN BEGETTER of the Swanscombe legend is Thomas Sprott, the thirteenth-century chronicler of St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, whose works were absorbed virtually unaltered into the later and more accessible chronicle of William Thorne. Sprott's work survives unpublished in fourteenth-century manuscripts in the British Library and at Lambeth; Thorne, by contrast, was printed in the seventeenth century by the Kentish antiquarian Twysden and translated by A. H. Davis in the twentieth.[1] Sprott wrote that in the aftermath of the Conqueror's victory at Hastings Archbishop Stigand and Aethelsige, Abbot of St. Augustine's, claiming that while before William's coming none had been a slave now nobles and commoners alike were brought under perpetual slavery, led Kentish resistance to the Conqueror. The Kentishmen, camouflaged by branches – 'like a moveable wood' – surrounded William at Swanscombe and extracted from him a confirmation of their liberties. Thus, 'the ancient liberties of the English and their ancestral laws and customs' had remained inviolable in the county of Kent alone until his own day, through the diligence of Archbishop Stigand and of Abbot Aethelsige.[2] Three centuries later, when the sixteenth-century antiquaries had made it known,[3] Sprott's dramatic story was repeated by Holinshed, Stow, and Speed, versified by Thomas Deloney, the silk-weaver poet, and given enduring literary celebrity by Drayton in the First Part of *Poly Olbion* of 1612;[4] some, indeed, have even hinted that the moveable wood of

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[1] British Library, Cotton MSS, Tiberius A IX & Lambeth Palace Library, MS. No. 419; Sir Roger Twysden, *Historiae Anglicanae Scriptores X* (London, 1652), cols 1757–2207; A. H. Davis, *William Thorne's Chronicle of Saint Augustine's Abbey Canterbury* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1934).

[2] Lambeth MS. 419 fols 123^{v}–124^{r}; BL, MSS. Cotton, Tiberius A IX fols 120^{r}–120^{v}; Davis, pp. 47–9.

[3] William Lambard (1536–1601) claimed that he first published Sprott's Swanscombe passage in *Archaionomia sive de priscis anglorum legibus libri* (London, 1568) in the unpaginated glossary *sub verbum* 'gavelkind'.

[4] Raphael Holinshed, *Holinshed's Chronicles: England, Scotland and Ireland,* ed. by Sir Henry Ellis, 6 vols (London, 1807–08; repr. New York: AMS Press, 1976), II, 2;

Swanscombe shares in the ancestry of Shakespeare's moving wood of Birnam. The Swanscombe story was so useful an incitement to patriotism and so agreeable to Kentish pride that it was thereafter frequently invoked in dangerous times, and it remains part of the mythology, if not of the history, of Kent;[5] the motto *Invicta* on the present county badge is an allusion to Swanscombe.

It is part of Kentish *legend* for Thomas Sprott was a fabulist. His story is of late date, is corroborated by no writer of the Norman era, and is incompatible with the known events of 1066. However, it was at first widely credited by antiquarians and scholars because Sprott's tale appeared to explain otherwise inexplicable features of Kentish society. Kent in the later Middle Ages had been so marked by personal freedom that villeinage was held not to exist within the county.[6] Further, Kent enjoyed a particular tenure, gavelkind, which provided for partible descent of land between heirs of the same degree instead of the primogeniture of the Common Law, although giving preference to males, and albeit that its partibility could be defeated by will. The tenure had other peculiarities: the land did not escheat for felony, and was easily alienable, the wardship of infant heirs fell to the kin and not to the lord, the tenant in gavelkind was protected against eviction by a lengthy legal process, and gavelkind had its own rules of majority, dower, and courtesy (the rights that a widower had in his deceased wife's lands).[7] Gavelkind was, men said, the Common Law of Kent, and in that phrase was its vital characteristic, for while partibility was known elsewhere by the separate customs of particular places, in Kent the presumption of the law was that all land was gavelkind, until proven in a specific instance otherwise (for there were other tenures in Kent, including knight service). Despite one general Act (31 Henry VIII cap. 3) and some six private Acts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries

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John Speed, *The History of Greate Britaine under the Conquests of the Romans, Saxons, Danes and Normans* (London, 1611), p. 416; John Stow, *A Summarye of the Chronicles of Englande* (London, 1570), fols 84 (b) – 86 (b); *The Works of Thomas Deloney*, ed. by Francis Oscar Mann (Oxford: Clarendon 1912, repr. Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), pp. 383–85; *The Works of Michael Drayton*, ed. by J. William Hebel, 5 vols (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press and Blackwell, 1961), IV, 381.

[5] *The Jacobites Hopes Frustrated*, 1690, in *The Harleian Miscellany*, ed. by J. Malham, 12 vols (London, 1808–11), IX, 456–65 (p. 460); 'To the Men of Kent', 1803, *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. by E. de Selincourt and Helen Darbishire, 2nd edn, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), III, 120.

[6] *Year Books of the Reign of King Edward the First* ed. and trans. by Alfred J. Horwood, Rolls Series, (London, 1863), p. 168.

[7] N. Neilson, 'Custom and the Common Law in Kent', *Harvard Law Review*, 38 (1924–25), 482–98; F. R. H. Du Boulay, *The Lordship of Canterbury: an Essay in Medieval Society* (London: Nelson, 1966), pp. 114–92.

all disgavelling the lands of particular individuals gavelkind proved enduring. Indeed, the difficulty of subsequently knowing what land had been disgavelled and the tenacity of the custom were such that some eighteenth and early nineteenth-century professional opinion was that the custom had reclaimed much of the disgavelled land. Gavelkind was not abolished until 1925.

Gavelkind was enshrined in the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Customals, texts which were well known in the sixteenth century. They claimed either that the gavelkinders or the men of Kent were free, and asserted a pre-Conquest origin for the customs:

> Ces sont les usages de Gavilekend, e de Gavylekendeys en Ket [sic], que furent devaunt le conquest, e en le Conquest, e totes houres ieskes en ca.[8]

It is unsurprising that faced with so substantial an anomaly men should have accepted the Swanscombe story, for it seemed to account for gavelkind and to be corroborated by the Customals. One of the earliest of the scholars was the most explicit as well as among the most circumspect. William Lambard wrote:

> For proofe whereof, I will call to witnesse *Thomas Spot*, sometimes a Moncke and Chronicler of saint *Augustines* at *Canterbury*, who, if he shall seeme to weake to give sufficient authoritie to the tale, bycause he only (of all the *Storiers* that I have seene) reporteth it, Yet, forasmuch as I my selfe first published that note out of his hystorie, and for that the matter it selfe also is neither incredible, nor unlikely, (the rather because this Shyre, even unto this day, enioyeth the custome of *give all kyn discent,* dower of the moytie, freedome of birth, and sundrie other usages muche different from other countries, I neither well may, ne will at all sticke, nowe eftsoones to rehearse it.[9]

He was not alone: Grafton, Archbishop Matthew Parker, Francis Godwin, the civilian Cowell, Spelman, and Selden, as well as Lambard himself, were among those who associated gavelkind with the liberties of Swanscombe.[10] This identification of the liberties of Swanscombe

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[8] William Lambard, *A Perambulation of Kent: Conteining the Description, hystorie and customes of that Shyre* (London, 1576), p. 427. See Felix Hull, 'The Custumal of Kent', *Archaeologia Cantiana,* 72 (1958), 148–59.

[9] Lambard, *Perambulation,* p. 22. Lambard was soon to become even more cautious. In a work probably compiled by 1585 *Dictionarium Angliae Topographicum et Historicum* (London, 1730), pp. 348–49, he said he could not think the Swanscombe story 'altogether untrew'.

[10] Richard Grafton, *A Chronicle at Large,* 2 vols ([London], 1568), II, 1–3; William Camden, *Britannia* (London, 1586), p. 166; [Matthew Parker], *De Antiquitate Britannicae Ecclesiae et Privilegiis Ecclesiae Cantuariensis, cum Archiepiscopis eius-*

with gavelkind gained credibility from extraneous circumstances. Among the places where partible inheritance existed by particular custom were London and Exeter; London could be explained by the Conqueror's charter to the City, while Exeter had resisted William in 1067–68 and gavelkind there could be presented as the result of a bargain similar to that at Swanscombe.[11]

But a simple equation of pre-Conquest Saxon law and post-Conquest Kentish custom faced substantial difficulties. Firstly, men were aware of other systems of partible inheritance, notably in Wales and Ireland, which, although discordant in important respects from Kentish usage, they called 'gavelkind'. There were, moreover, scriptural and classical precedents for partible inheritance; gavelkind was therefore seen as a Saxon example of the original mode of inheritance. Moreover, the Kentish lands of knight service were usually held at the Common Law. Indeed, to a modern eye, accustomed to regard knight-service as Norman, the Kentish knights' fees impugn the Swanscombe account. It was, however, less obviously so in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries when many held that knights' fees were not exclusively post-Conquest. The result of such uncertainty was that the cautious Lambard offered not one but two etymologies and two origins for gavelkind. The first etymology – 'gif all kyn' – for which he cited Welsh as well as Germanic or Saxon usage, stressed partibility. Lambard's etymology from 'gif all kyn' was to be widely followed and nowhere, perhaps with greater influence than in the successive editions of Coke's *Institutes*. However, his second etymology, from the Saxon word 'gafol', was derived from the term for rent, in money or services, and while thus tying Kentish gavelkind to a Saxon origin, also tied it to socage land, in contrast to land held by military service.[12]

Lambard, undecided as to the etymology of the word, was yet clear on the contemporary importance of gavelkind. He wrote that the yeomanry or common people:

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dem 70 ([London], 1572), p. 90; John Cowell, *The Interpreter: or, Booke containing the Signification of Words* (Cambridge, 1607), *s. v.* Gavelkind; Francis Godwin, *A Catalogue of the Bishops of England* (London, 1615), p. 71; Sir Henry Spelman, *Archaeologus in modum Glossarii* (London, 1626), pp. 311–12; John Selden, *Analecton Anglo-Britannicon* (Frankfort, 1615), p. 118; Lambard, *Perambulation*, pp. 22, 354, 388–417.

[11] Sir Roger Twysden, *Certaine Considerations upon the Government of England*, ed. by J. M. Kemble (London, Camden Society, 1849), pp. 38, 41.

[12] Lambard, *Perambulation*, pp. 388–90. The survival of his 'gif all kyn' etymology can be seen in Sir Edward Coke, *The First Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England*, 11th edn (London, 1719), p. 140.

> is no where more free, and ioily then in this shyre [...]. Neither be they here so muche bounden to the gentrie by *Copyhold*, or customarie tenures, as the inhabitantes of the *westerne* countries of the Realme be, nor at all indaungered by the feeble hold of *tenant right* (which is but a discent of a tenacie at wil) as the common people in *Northren* parts be: for *Copyhold* tenure is rare in Kent, and *tenant right* not heard of at al: But in place of these, the custome of *Gavilkind* prevayling everywhere, in a manner every man is a *freeholder* and hath some part of his own to live upon.[13]

So unequivocal a statement of peasant right could hardly go unchallenged. Lambard himself tells us in the 1596 edition of the *Perambulation* that his derivation from 'gif all kyn' had been attacked. Moreover his linking of gavelkind to socage provided his anonymous opponents with an argument against him, for they built on the medieval distinction between free socage and villein socage to assert that the former had been marked by primogeniture and the latter by partibility. Thus while not all socage was gavelkind, the implication was that gavelkind denoted not freehold but dependent tenure. Lambard, however, demonstrated that the test of gavelkind had been former partition, irrespective of the particular services.[14] But the issue had raised another question: if gavelkind was socage how was it that in Kent this early variety of socage tenures was replaced by the uniformity of gavelkind? Lambard, in answer, sought refuge in a new fundamental origin, absent from his 1576 text. The later uniformity was 'a restitution of the first custome, and a recourse to the right Originall'. But that original was not Saxon, despite Sprott, and despite Lambard's etymology from gafol, which indeed he retained, but Norman:

> For, by the Custome of *Normannie*, from whence we receaved our *Gavelkynde*, by the deliverie of *Odo* (Earle of Kent, and bastarde brother to King *William* the Conquerour) the landes there be of two like sundry discents and natures, as be our knights service and *Socage*, whereof the first they call Fife de Heaubert, that descendeth to the eldest sonne onely, the other they term *Fife* de *roturier* (the plowman's fee) which falleth upon all the Sons togither, without any distinction of *Free* or *Base*.[15]

Although Lambard left unstated the implication that knight-service also came from Normandy this passage points to the persuasiveness of the Kentish Case, where the two main and contrasting tenures each had a Norman parallel, in convincing men of the Norman origin of the

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[13] Lambard, *Perambulation*, pp. 10–11.
[14] Lambard, *Perambulation*, London, 1596 edn, pp. 539–40, 543–45.
[15] Lambard, *Perambulation*, 1596 edn, p. 545.

feudal tenures. It is notable that the next major Kentish historian of gavelkind, the royalist William Somner, also accepted the Norman origin of the fees, while *the* Restoration exponent of feudal history, Robert Brady, hinted at a Norman origin for gavelkind.[16]

While Lambard's ambiguity showed that the equation of the liberties of Swanscombe with gavelkind was vulnerable, it fell to John Selden in the notes he wrote to Drayton's *Poly Olbion* itself to use the other Kentish peculiarity, the absence of villeinage, as a disproof of the Swanscombe story. Like others before him, Lambard, Holinshed, Speed, and Stow among them, Selden equated Sprott's *servus* with the bondsman or villein, but Selden was self-consciously explicit on the mental process that lay behind his translation. He read Sprott by the light of contemporary legal concepts. He pointed to Sprott's Stigand 'observing that now whereas heretofore no Villeins (the Latine is Nullus fuerat servus, and applying it to Our Law phrase, I translate it) had been in England [...]' and dismissed Sprott because villeinage was known in England before 1066.[17] The Swanscombe story, having been at first interpreted in the light of later law was now scouted because its terms did not fit later legal usage.

Yet although 'villein' is a usual translation of 'servus', it is not clear that Sprott was alluding to villeinage in his account of Swanscombe. Firstly, since he said that both plebeians and nobles had been reduced to 'slavery' it is not obvious that by slavery he meant villeinage. Moreover, the infrequent instances where the word 'servus' or its cognates occur in the Sprott/Thorne texts provide a very instructive context for its use in the Swanscombe story. One such use occurs in the account of the abbacy of Abbot Scotland – Aethelsige's Norman successor at St. Augustine's – when the Abbey's asserted liberties were invaded by the post-Conquest Archbishop Lanfranc, in despite of the Abbey's claim to be Rome's 'spiritual nursling in the kingdom of the English, first in conventual dignity and monastic religion, by the grace of Almighty God who wishes his own sons to enjoy tribute, not to come to pay it along with slaves.' The passage is a double echo: it echoes first the spurious Privilege of St. Augustine, included earlier in the chronicles, where after a section that limits the authority of the Archbishops over the Abbots the text reads 'The kings of the Gentiles, says the Lord, have rule over them, but it is not so with you. And since tribute is received from those of another race, not from

[16] Robert Brady, *A Complete History of England unto the End of the Reign of King Henry III* (London, 1685), p. 67.

[17] Drayton, *Works*, ed. by J. William Hebel, IV, 385–86.

sons, so, as the Lord himself concludes, therefore are the sons free'.[18] Secondly, both the Privilege and the passage on Scotland echo Matthew 17 vv, 25–26 and Luke 22 vv, 25–26.

Nor is this all, for Sprott said that Stigand and Aethelsige had acted after the example of the Maccabees and it is clear that Sprott's tale drew on the story in the Apocrypha of an heroic resistance to an alien and impious law.[19] In both the scriptural instances and in the case of Abbot Scotland slavery is seen as the rule of the alien and its mark is tribute, not predial servitude. It is also clear that in the chroniclers' minds alien rule and slavery were associated with the invasion of the privileges of their house by the post-Conquest Archbishops; the verse in Luke aimed to prevent the apostles – and by extension their successors – from domineering the one over the other.

There can, though, be little doubt that the authors of the St. Augustine's chronicle texts, as we now have them, intended their readers to count gavelkind among the liberties salvaged at Swanscombe. In a passage sub anno 1059 that tells of Aethelsige's succession as Abbot his later career, though minus Swanscombe, is anticipated, and the passage concludes with the statement that Aethelsige handed over the land of Dene in gavelkind to Blakemann, Brithred, and Agelred the sons of Brithmer.[20] The chroniclers then immediately notice, but s.a. 1064, Stigand's gift of a precious cross to the Abbey. The consequence is that when the Swanscombe story occurs in the next entry the reader assumes that gavelkind was among the liberties there saved by Aethelsige, and by Stigand, whose own associations with the Abbey have just been emphasised. The curious arrangement of the texts at this point may suggest an interpolation in an existing story made for the purpose of identifying St. Augustine's with the emerging Custom of Kent; the possibility is the greater because the 1059 instance appears to be the only reference to gavelkind in the whole of Thorne's lengthy text. Whether or not there was such an interpolation, the relationship between Sprott's Swanscombe story, Abbot Scotland, and the Privilege firmly associates the chronicles with the campaign of forgery and falsification of history

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[18] BL, Cotton MSS, Tiberius A IX fols 108^{v}–109^{r} & 123^{r}; Lambeth, MS. 419, fols 112^{v}–13^{r} & 126^{r}; Davis, pp. 13, 55. A modern scholarly edition of the Privilege is given by S. E. Kelly, *Charters of St Augustine's Abbey Canterbury and Minster in Thanet* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1995), pp. 19–22.

[19] I Maccabees 3. 59: BL, Cotton MSS, Tiberius A IX, fol. 120^{v}; Lambeth, MS 419, fol. 123^{v} – 24^{r}; Davis, p. 47.

[20] This is the reading given by BL, Cotton MSS, Tiberius A, IX fol. 120^{r} and Lambeth, MS. 419, fol. 123^{v}; Thorne, Davis p. 47, omits Brithred. (The spelling of the names in the sources varies).

waged in post-Conquest St. Augustine's.[21] Selden was right to be suspicious of Sprott's text, but he may have criticised it for the wrong reasons; the immunity of the 1059 passage from criticism was to have significant consequences for the later historiography of gavelkind.

The Swanscombe legend played only a minor part in the political debates of the seventeenth century, for it suited the needs of no party exactly; it demonstrated a provincial limitation on the Conqueror at the price of asserting national slavery, it offered monarchists an incomplete conquest, and Levellers an incomplete Norman Yoke. However, there is some reason to think that it may have played a small and covert part in the creation of Leveller theory. Samuel Daniel, whose assertion of the Norman origin of the Common Law the Levellers adopted, at least gave the Swanscombe story, though he denied the efficacy of the concessions; we know that he used Lambard, and Lambard's second account of gavelkind would have suited his purpose. More significant is the remark by John Hare, another source of Leveller opinion, that those, like the English, who confess themselves the subjects of a conquest 'are in the quality of tenants in villeinage', for it repeats the contemporary reading of the Swanscombe story.[22]

The contemporary controversy over land may have had its influence on the Saxon scholar William Somner, whose scholarly *Treatise of Gavelkind*, written in 1647 and published in 1660, at first sight seems far removed from such polemics. Somner, by adopting the Norman origin of the military tenures, by improving Selden's critique of the Swanscombe story (he found villeinage not only in Kent, but even on gavelkind land), and by rejecting both Lambard's 'gif all kyn' etymology and his speculation that Odo of Bayeux introduced gavelkind, and by developing instead Lambard's alternative derivation of gavelkind from gafol, created what became the orthodox view of Kentish gavelkind. Gavelkind was the survival upon socage land of Saxon custom, for while William allowed the continuance of partible inheritance, except on lands of knight-service, the custom, save in Kent, gave way before primogeniture was English law waned in the post-Conquest era. In Kent, by contrast, partibility remained on gavelkind

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[21] Richard Emms, *The Historical Traditions of St. Augustine's Abbey Canterbury*, in *Canterbury and the Norman Conquest: Churches, Saints and Scholars 1066–1109*, ed. by Richard Eales and Richard Sharpe (London and Rio Grande: Hambledon Press, 1995), pp. 159–68; S. E. Kelly *Charters of St Augustine's Abbey*, p. cv.

[22] Samuel Daniel, *The First Part of the Historie of England* (London, 1612), pp. 122, 132–33, and *The Collection of the History of England Revised* (London, 1634), p. 46; John Hare, *England's Proper and only way to an Establishment in Honour* (London 1648), in *Harl. Misc.* VI, 175–181 (p. 177).

land, and indeed extended its range, for the features of the original *tenure* of gavelkind spread across other socage lands in Kent to become popularly known as the *custom* of gavelkind.[23]

But Somner's scholarly precision in confining his investigation to Kent – he held that other systems of partible inheritance were separate from the Kentish case – and within Kent to censual or rent-service land, may indicate a wish to limit the significance of gavelkind. Clearly his concern to establish that gavelkind was by nature base tenure and 'ariseth from ignoble, base and plebeian Tenures, in which onely Gavel is conversant' places him alongside Lambard's critics. Hence, perhaps, his attack upon Lambard's derivation of gavelkind from 'gif all kyn', though he was himself prepared to admit that before 1066 partibility was the general custom. But, he said, gavelkind's 'signification of Censual, Rented land, or Rent-Service land was never questioned till that within our fathers memories, one and all [...] run a head in a wrong and mistaken derivation'.[24] Certainly, Lambard's passage on the condition of the gavelkinders had been spread abroad: Philemon Harris's 1610 translation of Camden for the first time inserted it into the *Britannia,* where it remained for several editions. While it was true that copyhold was rare in Kent, and freehold correspondingly common, Lambard's equation of gavelkind and freehold in the atmosphere of the time may have appeared tenurially provocative. Somner, a conservative man who had served one of the largest landowners in Kent, as Registrar of the Courts of the Canterbury diocese before the Civil War and as Auditor of Christ Church, Canterbury thereafter, might well have preferred a derivation limiting such pretensions: that from 'gafol'.

Somner related 'gavelkind', as do many modern historians, to other Kentish terms connected to rents and services that include the element 'gavel' or 'gafol'. But the derivation rendered him vulnerable to the St. Augustine's writers, for gafol was a Saxon word, and Somner held that gavelkind, *at least in the sense of partibility,* was as old as gafol, was pre-Conquest, but he also knew that the technical forms for gavelkind tenure did not come in until the later twelfth century, the only exception being the passage from Sprott sub anno 1059, which Somner duly quoted, albeit, perhaps, with a trace of scepticism. Yet Sprott's evidence was seductive, for Somner held that gavelkind was primarily a tenure, while partibility and the other associated incidents were customs 'accompanying land of that *Tenure*'. Far from categorically dismissing the case of Brithmer's sons as an

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[23] William Somner, *A Treatise of Gavelkind Both Name and Thing* (London, 1660), pp. 3–12, 14–35, 49, 50–52, 60–61, 63–71, 72–77, 82, 89.
[24] Somner, pp. 35, 41.

anachronism, Somner asserted that prior to the reign of Henry II gavelkind tenure could be created by other words – *de gablo, de censu, reddendo* – than those of the later legal formula. But if gavelkind tenure could, by this argument, be held of indeterminate but early origin, an origin early enough not to exclude Sprott's testimony, in Somner's view its heyday had had a precise end. For Somner held that the limitations upon sub-feudation brought in by the statute *Quia Emptores* of 1290 prevented the creation thereafter of any new tenures in gavelkind. It was therefore from gavelkind tenures created before the end of the thirteenth century that Somner envisaged gavelkind in the wider sense spreading across Kentish land.[25] But Somner's realization, noted above, that not all the features of gavelkind could be proven of Saxon date might have led him to examine, as historians much later were to do, the growth and evolution of the custom itself: instead Sprott abetted his concentration on tenure, and on very early origins for that tenure, and thereby kept him, and with him the subsequent debate, to older paths.

Neither could he explain why Kentish inheritance customs had proved so much more resistant to primogeniture than those elsewhere, nor why partition was proper to gavelkind and not to socage. His answer to the first, that Kentish peasant holders were less inclined than the gentry to worry about the maintenance of family status clearly evaded the problem, while his answer to the other, that such was the custom 'it being the main essential part of a Custome to be of an unknown rise', merely denied that the problem was solvable. Likewise, he admitted he could not say 'how it came to passe that Gavelkynd is in a manner proper, and Vilenage improper onely to Kent'.[26] Somner's case was not water-tight and, indeed, was challenged; in 1663 Silas Taylor's *The History of Gavelkind* argued that gavelkind, once universal, owed its historical beginnings here to the Britons and that the Kentish form was merely a variant of a widespread custom.

Among those who subsequently rejected the Swanscombe story as the explanation for gavelkind were both the author of the leading early eighteenth-century commentary on the Common Law, Sir Matthew Hale, and the chief eighteenth-century authority on gavelkind, Thomas Robinson.[27] But if Somner had undermined the Swanscombe legend he had, aided by the St. Augustine's writers, strengthened the existing view that gavelkind was the usual Saxon mode of inheritance. The final

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[25] Somner, pp. 51–52, 61–62, 144–46.

[26] Somner, pp. 49, 62, 89–90.

[27] Chief Justice Sir Matthew Hale, *The History of the Common Law of England*, ed. by Charles M. Gray (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1971), pp. 143–44; and Thomas Robinson, *The Common Law of Kent* (London, 1741), pp. 28–29.

abolition of the feudal tenures at the Restoration encouraged this conviction, for lands previously held by knight-service were subsequently held by free socage, thus leading men, perhaps unconsciously, to see past socage by the light of the modern. Something of this can be seen as early as the later Restoration and Revolutionary years in William Atwood's and James Tyrrell's attempts to prove the existence in post-Conquest England of numerous free men, outside the ranks of the military tenants, who, they postulated, must have been represented in the early forms of Parliaments. To this end they emphasised the wide geographical extent of gavelkind and widened the social spread of both gavelkind and socage, while Atwood and, at first, Tyrrell accepted the Swanscombe story. Atwood even provided his own gloss on Sprott; he translated 'nullus fuerat servus' as 'none of the English were servants' and said 'I conceive the meaning of the words is no more than that there had ever been in *England* a Distinction between Free-men and Slaves; and therefore that none of the *English* (that is, the People of the Land, which the Law has ever confin'd to *Free-holders*, they that depend upon the Will of others, Villains or Servants being no *Cives*, any part of the Nation in that sense) ought to bear that Slavery, which the Violence of the *Normans* threatned to all in Common'.[28] Lambard's free-holders had become the politically competent citizens of eighteenth-century political theory. The ultimate acceptance that the Norman Conquest marked the era of fully-fledged feudal tenures in England had a similar effect, for its corollary was the belief that partible inheritance was the Saxon predecessor of Norman feudal primogeniture. Socage thus became in retrospect prestigious, and was seen as a reservoir of Saxon liberties.[29] Nor in this atmosphere could Kentish gavelkind be held firmly separate, as Atwood's and Tyrrell's works show, from other examples of partible inheritance. Somner, indeed, provided a route for their approximation. Somner spoke of gavelkind as Kentish, but he also regarded Saxon law as a series of regional customary laws out of which the Common Law ultimately arose. But such provincial

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[28] William Atwood, *Jus Anglorum ab Antiquo,* (London, 1681), pp. 49–50, 51–6; James Tyrell, *Bibliotheca Politica* (London, 1694), Dialogue VI, 421 & Dialogue X, 729 (these two Dialogues bear the separate date 1693), and *General History of England*, 3 vols (London, 1696–1704), II, xliv–xlv, xcii, 7–8.

[29] Sir Henry Spelman, *The Original, Growth, Propagation and Condition of Feuds and Tenures by Knight Service in England,* ed. by Edmund Gibson, in *Reliquiae Spelmannianae* (London, 1723), p. 43; Sir Martin Wright, *Introduction to the Law of Tenures,* 3rd edn (London, 1768), pp. 213–14; Robinson, pp. 9, 30, 31; Sir William Blackstone, *Law Tracts, 2* vols (Oxford, 1762), I, 189, 248, and *Commentaries on the Laws of England, 4 vols* (Oxford, 1765, repr. London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1966), I, 74–5 and II, 81, 84–5.

customs could easily be held to have contained British elements. Those, often lawyers, who were still attracted to versions of immemorialism conflated Somner and Taylor; Blackstone, whose view of the origin of the Common Law was Somner's, drew upon both, and, in the sense of partibility, attributed gavelkind to the Britons.[30] The view that gavelkind, of which the Kentish case was the most celebrated example, had been generally the Saxon form of succession became an eighteenth-century axiom.

Moreover, traditionally-minded men still felt that a provincial exception such as the Kentish survival of gavelkind, implied an explicit concession. The attitude, bolstered by comment in Edmund Gibson's 1695 translation of Camden's *Britannia,* long lingered; right at the end of the eighteenth-century the county historian Hasted was unable to decide whether or not that concession had been made at Swanscombe.[31] Paradoxically, therefore, suspicion of Sprott led some men to create a mirror-image of Swanscombe; gavelkind had survived as a reward for rapid submission, while the same assumption led others still to insist on the truth of Swanscombe.[32] In some cases this belief was muted, but present. Blackstone himself was an instance, for on what could his conviction rest that in Kent socage tenure 'was preserved with a high hand, as our historians inform us it was', if not upon Swanscombe?[33] But whether or not men believed in the Swanscombe legend, the eighteenth-century view of gavelkind – an original mode of inheritance that prior to 1066 had had nation-wide application – had potential polemical value for those who idolised the Saxons, should the position of the landed aristocracy be attacked. Further, the emergence of the theory of historical stages of society – classically set out in Adam Smith's allodial, feudal, and commercial governments – not only provided an analysis that could be linked to Saxonism and gavelkind but suggested that primogeniture was the artificial mode of inheritance of a now obsolete stage of society.

Political opportunity ensured that the first successful attack upon the principle of aristocracy should be in the new United States where

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[30] Blackstone, *Commentaries,* IV, 401, 406–07.

[31] Edmund Gibson, *Camden's Britannia, Newly Translated into English with Large Additions and Improvements* (London, 1695), col. 213 (b); Edward Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent,* 2nd edn, 12 vols (Canterbury, 1797–1801, repr. East Ardsley, Wakefield: EP Publishing, 1972), I, 319. Robinson, p. 28, held its survival explained by William's supposed *general* promises to maintain the laws.

[32] John Harris, *The History of Kent in Five Parts,* 1 vol. only published (London, 1719), I, 461. Thomas Cox, *Magna Britannia et Hibernia,* 6 vols (London, 1720), II, 1076.

[33] Blackstone, *Commentaries,* II, 85.

the primogeniture present in law codes of some of the States was abolished on the grounds that primogeniture had been unknown to the Saxons and was antithetical to the republican ethos. The leading assailant was Jefferson, and the term he used for the system of partible inheritance to be introduced into Virginia was gavelkind.[34] Gavelkind had the desired Saxon ring, but it is worth noting that attempts by historians to derive partible inheritance elsewhere in the early United States, notably in New England, specifically from Kentish gavelkind appear to have foundered.[35] Jefferson's social motives and their alleged results were to be recalled in due course in Britain both by reformers[36] and by conservatives faced by what their opponents asserted were mere technical changes in the laws of inheritance.

But in Britain, although one can find recommendations of gavelkind in late eighteenth-century polemical literature,[37] the strength of the landed interest ensured that the first Parliamentary Bill opposing primogeniture was delayed until 1836. By then the political and intellectual context of the debate had changed. Revolutionary and Bonapartist governments had imposed systems of partible inheritance in France, while in Britain parliamentary reform had followed the beginnings of the nineteenth-century attempt to simplify the law of real property. In thought, laissez-faire economics had put out its full strength, with virtually all political economists, save McCulloch, averse to primogeniture, while the beginnings of nineteenth-century historical interest in Teutonic history were already apparent.

The movement for law reform produced the Commission on Real Property, appointed as a consequence of a motion made by Brougham in the Commons in February 1828, thus creating a forum for the discussion of gavelkind and primogeniture. The Commission, especially at first, defended primogeniture as the necessary corollary of a monarchical and aristocratic society and regarded gavelkind as an archaic part of the law that should be abolished in the cause of simplicity. However, some of its witnesses, most interestingly the economist Nassau Senior, praised gavelkind for treating intestacy with less injustice than the Common Law, while both Senior and the Commissioners pointed to gavelkind's discrimination against the

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[34] *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson,* ed. by Julian P. Boyd, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950–), I (1950), 132–33, 344, 353, 363 & VII, (1953), 144.

[35] George L. Haskins, 'The Beginnings of Partible Inheritance in the American Colonies', *The Yale Law Journal*, 51 (1941–42), 1280–1315 (pp. 1297–1300).

[36] John Bright, *Parliamentary Debates,* Hansard, 3rd series, 183 (1866) col. 1996.

[37] [William Ogilvie], *An Essay on the Right of Property in Land* (London, 1781), Part II, 71.

daughters of intestates;[38] it was to be the issue of intestate succession that gave gavelkind its place in the wider nineteenth-century debate on land reform.[39] The law of intestacy was debated in the Commons in 1836 and 1837 and on seven occasions between 1850 and 1878, to no avail. Intestate succession to real property was controlled by the doctrine of primogeniture, but the alleged desire of those who wished reform in the law of intestacy in the interests of equity concealed a deeper attack on the social and political position of the landed classes, for the reformers believed that only the sanction given to primogeniture by the existing law of intestacy made the creation of an heir in each generation socially acceptable. As the more logical and more outspoken reformers said the real target was the creation of life interests and contingent remainders in land by strict settlement, the device which maintained the unity of the great estates, upon which the social and political power of the aristocracy rested. An interesting case is provided by Charles Neate, Fellow of Oriel and Professor of Political Economy at Oxford and M. P. for the City of Oxford. Neate defended Gavelkind, attacked the strict settlement, but unusually for one on his side of the argument held that feudalism itself had been a source of freedom.[40] A major motive for reform was the laissez-faire desire for a free market in land; the campaign, begun in the 1830s, was given a second wind by the aged Cobden, was avowedly a successor to the Anti-Corn Law League, and was backed by the Cobden Club. It was a political campaign by those of the middle classes who regretted the failure of the Great Reform Act of 1832 to put a term to aristocratic power. Among its supporters was the historian Thorold Rogers, Professor of Political Economy at London and at Oxford, while the leading parliamentary advocate for reform during most of the debates upon the laws of intestacy was Peter Locke King, Member for East Surrey from 1847 to 1874. Others who gave support to the cause in the Commons included John Bright and Thomas Bayley Potter, a member of the Manchester commercial dynasty, who was M. P. for Rochdale in succession to Cobden from 1865 to 1895.

Although laissez-faire doctrine and equity provided the staples of their arguments some reformers overtly urged a return to gavelkind or

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[38] The Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Law of England Respecting Real Property, *First Report*, pp. 7, 404, and *Third Report*, p. 10, in *British Sessional Papers: House of Commons* [1801–1969], ed. by Edgar J. Erikson (New York: Readex Microprint, 1960–76), vols X (1961), 1829, and XXIII (1960), 1831–32.

[39] Margot C. Finn, *After Chartism: Class and Nation in English Radical Politics, 1848–74*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 267–73.

[40] Charles Neate, *The History and Uses of the Law of Entail and Settlement* (London, 1865), pp. 14–15, 18–30, 44.

to the Saxon model, while an inevitable feature in the debates on the bills to reform the law of intestacy was a pejorative attack on primogeniture as feudal, an attack sometimes accompanied by a didactic contrast with earlier practice.[41] Gavelkind provided a national precedent[42] that could be urged to offset the alien and widely disliked *Code Napoléon*, which conservatives cited as evidence of the deleterious consequences of abandoning primogeniture. Moreover, gavelkind had tactical advantages within the reforming groups, who were by no means all of one mind. A change in the intestacy laws on the precedent of gavelkind suited minimalist land reformers for it would encourage a free market in land and would dish the aristocracy, but would otherwise leave the rights of property and testators intact.

Reference to the Kentish example was therefore very frequently made, but in the House at least appeal to it was not wholly to the advantage of the reformers. Conservatives had little difficulty in brushing the historical argument aside; Beresford-Hope, Kentish landowner and Member for Cambridge University, whose own Gothic enthusiasms are evident in All Saints, Margaret Street, London and in the college for missionary clergy built on the site of St Augustine's Abbey itself, both of which he financed, put matters better than most: 'though archaeological meetings during the recess were always curious, and often entertaining, he would rather take his place in the House as a man of the time'.[43] Moreover, the intestacy issue became embroiled in debate as to whether small-scale land-holding was economically advantageous or no. It is one of the paradoxes of gavelkind that many of those who had written about it had disliked it, as leading to agrarian and political fragmentation, and the fear of *morcellement* was still strong in what remained a largely landed House. Though some of the reformers hoped that a return to gavelkind succession would lead to a proliferation of small landowners (a hope that links the intestacy issue with the more radical cause of the peasant proprietor), not all of the supporters of intestacy reform favoured very small landholdings, especially where they blurred the distinction

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[41] J. Thorold Rogers, 'The Laws of Real Property' *Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science* for 1864, pp. 128–29; C. Wren Hoskyns, 'Land Laws of England', in *System of Land Tenure in Various Countries* [no ed.] (London, Cobden Club, 1870), p. 92–144 (p. 107); Peter Locke King, *Injustice of the Law Succession to the Real Property of Intestates* (London, 1854), pp. 17, 21, 24 and *PD,* 130 (1854), cols 661–62, and *PD* 152 (1859) cols 476–77; Thomas Bayley Potter *PD* 241 (1878), col. 1163.

[42] C. Wren Hoskyns, pp. 101, 117–118. Gavelkind was also *democratic*, George Brodrick, *English Land and English Landlords* (London, 1881), p. 447.

[43] *PD* 183 (1866), col. 1982.

between capital and labour. Gavelkind, therefore, very frequently appeared on the conservative side of the argument. Beresford-Hope especially used Kentish experience as a warning against tampering with primogeniture. The small properties gavelkind created 'were a simple nuisance both to the community and to the unfortunate persons themselves'.[44]

The political controversy both reflected and stimulated interest in gavelkind out of doors. Two of the library of books specifically written on Kentish gavelkind come from these years. Charles Sandys's very Saxonist *Consuetudines Kanciae* of 1851 clearly stood for reform and against primogeniture – 'the last relic of Norman tyranny and usurpation'[45] – while Elton's *The Tenures of Kent* of 1867 was stimulated by the Kentish tenurial complexity revealed by the Real Property Commission, by the work of the Record Commission, and by the easier access of the period to the archival sources. The historical debate, however, was complicated by the belief of the new Teutonic school of historians in the existence of communally-held land in early Germanic society. To this school the obscure and rare word *folcland* rather than meaning tenant-land or villein-land, as most writers hitherto had thought, meant instead the communally-owned land of the folk. An influential early statement of this thesis came from the whig writer John Allen,[46] but Hallam, Palgrave, Thorpe, Kemble, and later Green all touched upon or developed the theory. This mistaken view bedevilled Saxon history until destroyed by Vinogradoff's celebrated essay in the *English Historical Review* for 1893. Its influence can be seen here in Charles Elton. Yet Elton's use of the latest Saxon scholarship led to little advance on Somner; he still identified gavelkind with the socage tenants of the great late Saxon estates that had absorbed the *folcland* of the early period.[47] But despite its misinterpretation of *folcland*, the interest of the Teutonic school in early Germanic landholding had value in ultimately providing an escape from the equation of gavelkind with socage or tenant land for those historians for whom gavelkind was of very early date.

But the old conundrum – how to account for Kent? – recurred. It forced itself upon C. S. Kenny, Fellow of Downing, in 1878, when writing his joint prize-winning entry in an essay competition set at

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[44] *PD* 194 (1868–69), col. 959.

[45] Charles Sandys, *Consuetudines Kanciae* (London: 1851), p. 239.

[46] John Allen, *Inquiry into the Rise and Growth of the Royal Prerogative in England,* (London, 1830), pp. 135–56.

[47] Charles Elton, *The Tenures of Kent* (London, 1867), pp. 13–14.

Cambridge upon the law of Primogeniture.[48] The set subject is significant as a sign of contemporary interest in the controversy upon inheritance law and its significance is enhanced by the knowledge that later, as an M. P., Kenny was to move a bill for the abolition of primogeniture. The difficulty was the more acute in that belief in the Swanscombe story was visibly fading away. Some early nineteenth-century historians, holding gavelkind to be primitive custom, would have liked to have believed it. Palgrave is such a case, but his testimony was ambivalent; once speaking of the customs he referred to Swanscombe's 'substantive truth'; elsewhere he denied it.[49] Other historians ignored it. The reports of the real Property Commission contain two allusions to Swanscombe, one, ironic, from a witness, and one from the Commission itself. In neither case was the allusion identified.[50] Sandys who argued for the continuous maintenance of Saxon freedom in Kent would surely have used the story, could he have believed it. It appears he could not – the nearest he went to overt mention of Swanscombe was to quote the relevant passage from *Poly Olbion*.[51] Kenny, whose sympathies were reformist, toyed with following Palgrave's hint, writing 'It is quite possible that beneath the fable of the moving wood of Swanscombe some true story is concealed. It is quite possible that William did covenant with the Men of Kent for the preservation of their Saxon laws'. But Kenny realised that even that postulate would not do the business; William allegedly made promises in general to the English and so 'the difficulty comes back in another form. Why was the covenant kept in Kent, when it was forgotten everywhere else?'[52] Elton, by contrast, explicitly rejected the story; indeed, he attributed the substantial survival of English land-law in Kent after 1066 to the Kentishmen's prompt submission to William.[53]

The historical advances of the day proved fatal to Swanscombe, as they increasingly did to the texts that traditionally had been deployed to minimise the Norman Conquest; a case from an historian cited here is Palgrave's criticism of the Croyland chronicler, Ingulf, in the

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[48] Courtney Stanhope Kenny, *The History of the Law of Primogeniture in England* (Cambridge, 1878), p. 28.

[49] Sir Francis Palgrave, *The History of Normandy and England* (1851 onwards incomplete at his death) in *The Collected Historical Works of Sir Francis Palgrave*, ed. by Sir R. H. Inglis Palgrave, 10 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1919–22), III, 205, and 'The Conquest and the Conqueror' (1844), *CHW*, IX, 458.

[50] *First Report*, p. 253 and *Third Report*, p. 9.

[51] Sandys, p. 90.

[52] Kenny, p. 28.

[53] Elton, p. 10, 52.

Quarterly Review for 1826. Further, not only was Swanscombe no longer serious history, it became impossible to argue that Kent had been treated by William any differently from the rest of the country. When both points appeared in the leading Saxonist and radical historian Freeman's history of the Norman Conquest[54] a definitive moment in the history of gavelkind had clearly arrived.

But as the Swanscombe story fades one can see in the works of these years the faint lineaments of later explanations. If Kentish peculiarity was not the consequence of the provincial preservation by political and legal action of older national custom, as Swanscombe asserted and the nineteenth-century political debate still largely assumed, then the reasons for Kentish difference must lie in Kent itself, perhaps in particular economic and social conditions in Saxon or medieval Kent, or perhaps in some difference in the original settlement of Kent from that elsewhere. Such explanations, vestigally present earlier, were no longer overshadowed by an argument that was primarily legalistic and constitutional. The tribal and the socio-economic explanations of gavelkind were to be variously combined to diverse ends: by Seebohm to suggest a continuity between Celtic, Roman, Jutish, and later Kent; by Vinogradoff to argue that commercial prosperity from late Saxon times onwards allowed a free tribal society in Kent substantially to elude the manorial phase of English history, and to bear witness to an earlier Teutonic freedom; and by Maitland and his followers to assert the prime importance of post-Conquest circumstance in the creation of gavelkind.[55]

Socio-economic explanations were strongly present in Kenny, who suggested that the greater freedom of the Kentish peasantry than that experienced elsewhere, the dominance in Kent of ecclesiastical lordship, and Kent's geographical position 'combined to preserve in Kent the Saxon law of inheritance'.[56] The statement is particularly striking because Kenny recognised that it was only after the

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[54] Edward Augustus Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England,* 2nd edn rev., vols 1–3 (Oxford, 1870–75), III, 538, and note 3.

[55] Frederic Seebohm, *Tribal Custom in Anglo-Saxon Law* (London: Longmans, Green, 1902), pp. 440–42; Sir Paul Vinogradoff, *Villainage in England* (Oxford 1892; repr. Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), pp. 133–37, 205–08, 406–09 and *The Growth of the Manor,* 2nd rev. edn (London: Allen & Unwin, 1911, 5th impr. 1951), pp. 141, 205–07, 315–18; Sir Frederick Pollock and Frederick William Maitland, *The History of English Law Before the Time of Edward I,* 2nd edn, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908), I, 187–88; Sir William Searle Holdsworth, *An Historical Introduction to the Land Law,* 2nd edn (Oxford: (Clarendon), 1927, 2nd repr. Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1977), pp. 133–44.

[56] Kenny, pp. 29–31.

Conqueror's time that differences between Kent and the rest of England appeared; yet he preserved the Saxon origin of gavelkind. The alternative hypothesis, that the peculiarities of Kent were due to a different tribal settlement was embryonically present in Sandys. Earlier writers on gavelkind had not usually made much of Kent's specifically Jutish past, regarding the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes as almost undifferentiated, and frequently calling her people Saxons.[57] Sandys insisted that Kent was a Jutish kingdom whose gavelkind customs went back to its Dark Age beginnings. Yet Sandys, too, was a half-way house, for anxious to prove that the Jutes were Germanic not Scandinavian, he insisted that they were Saxons.[58] The swelling belief in a free tribal, folk community, foreshadowed here in John Allen and in full flower in Vinogradoff, archaeological advance, and the Teutonist bent of much nineteenth-century history, later brought substance to Sandy's Jutish emphasis. The apotheosis of this approach was to be, of course, Jolliffe's fascinating but much contested book where gavelkind is seen as originating not in socage tenure but in the folk-right and the national obligations of the tribesmen of the Jutish kingdom.[59] While the relative contribution of tribal origin and of later Kentish circumstance in the creation of gavelkind remained, and remains, disputed it is clear that to such explanations of Kentish difference as these the Swanscombe legend is otiose.

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[57] Hasted, I, 48: 'compounded under the general name of Saxons'.

[58] Sandys, pp. 39–46, 47.

[59] J. E. A. Jolliffe, *Pre-Feudal England: The Jutes* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1933; repr. London: Cass, 1962), *passim* and esp. pp. 38–9.

REPRESENTING THE MIDDLE AGES: COURT FESTIVALS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY PRUSSIA

DAVID E. BARCLAY

ON 13 JULY 1829 four of Prussia's royal princes appeared at the courtyard of the Neues Palais, near Potsdam, on horseback and costumed as medieval knights. They had come to celebrate the 'Festival of the Enchantment of the White Rose', a grandiose birthday party for the princes' sister, the Russian Empress Alexandra Feodorovna. The festivities included the reenactment of an *altdeutsches Ritterspiel*, with the princes joined by high-ranking aristocrats dressed as 'knights' riding a series of quadrilles and engaging in chivalric competition for the honour of receiving the victor's prize from the Empress's hands. Two of the younger princes – William, who many decades later became the first Emperor of unified Germany, and Carl, who gained a reputation as one of Europe's greatest nineteenth-century collectors of Byzantine art – cut dashing figures in their splendid suits of armour with lance, sword, and winged helmets. Rather less imposing, however, was Crown Prince Frederick William himself. One especially fawning observer, Countess Elise Bernstorff, wrote unconvincingly that the Crown Prince 'fits into his costume as though he has never worn another; he sits astride his steed as though he has never ridden another; he regards everything serenely and confidently, either as if he were confident of victory or unconcerned with the victor's prize'.[1] In fact, Frederick William was fat, extremely nearsighted, and a poor rider; so, despite his own enthusiasm for the celebration and rejuvenation of medieval values, as a 'knight' he must have been rather unprepossessing. Predictably, the Crown Prince did not receive any of the prizes that were awarded that day, which included golden chains, silver beakers, and Turkish sabres.[2]

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[1] Gräfin Elise von Bernstorff geb. Gräfin von Dernath, *Ein Bild aus der Zeit von 1789 bis 1835. Aus ihren Aufzeichnungen*, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Berlin: Mittler und Sohn, 1896), I, 143.

[2] For details of the festival, see David E. Barclay, *Frederick William IV and the Prussian Monarchy 1840–1861* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 1–2. Many of the ideas that I advance in that study benefited from my conversations with Leslie Workman and from my collaboration with *Studies in Medievalism* and with the

As startling as the sight of the Crown Prince must have been, just as incongruous was the idea of a medieval tournament itself, especially in the courtyard of one of Frederick the Great's palaces in the park of Sanssouci. During his long reign from 1740 to 1786, that monarch had embodied a state which was itself one of the most modern in Europe, and one of the least entitled or inclined to boast of the ancient lineage of its dynasty. Described a few years ago by the historian Sebastian Haffner as a 'raw state based on reason', the Kingdom of Prussia was a relative newcomer among the powers of Europe.[3] The kingdom itself had been established only in 1701, and thereafter it remained a shifting, protean agglomeration of territories, bound together only by the accidents of conquest or politics and by the coincidence of attachment to the Hohenzollern dynasty. Those territories certainly had their own deeply-rooted, historic traditions, structures, and identities, many of them dating to the Middle Ages. Among those territories was the Mark Brandenburg, the core of the Prussian state itself, where the medieval past is still present to an astonishing extent. Berlin is surrounded by well-preserved medieval towns, churches, and monasteries; tourists flock in the summer to a reconstructed thirteenth-century village in the south of the city; and a recently published murder mystery that focuses on the demise of Brandenburg's Ascanian dynasty in the fourteenth century turned out to be something of a bestseller.[4] But even in Brandenburg a specifically 'Prussian' tradition was an historic latecomer, and one which had few clearcut medieval or dynastic antecedents.[5] Many historians have described the rather hardnosed modernity of the Prussian state and its dynasty in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but few have captured its character as succinctly as Count Friedrich Wilhelm von Brandenburg, the illegitimate son of Frederick William II – he was sometimes called '*der Bastard Preußens*' – and Minister President of Prussia after the revolution of 1848. The very essence of Prussia, Brandenburg wrote in 1850, was its resistance to

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International Congress on Medievalism. I owe him a great debt of gratitude for his interest and support over many years.

[3] Sebastian Haffner, *Preußen ohne Legende*, 2nd edn (Hamburg: Gruner & Jahr, 1979), p. 55.

[4] Horst Bosetzky, *Der letzte Askanier* (Berlin: Argon, 1997).

[5] When I speak of 'Prussia' in this article, I am alluding to the entire kingdom, not just to the provinces of East and West Prussia, which of course could point to powerful medieval traditions rooted in the times of the Teutonic Knights.

particularism and its indifference to historically rooted traditions: 'A centralized state of soldiers and officials. That was its signature.'[6]

Despite (or perhaps because of) the very modernity of the Prussian state and Prussian society, the Hohenzollern dynasty nevertheless played a critical role in encouraging and sustaining a revival of interest in the Middle Ages in nineteenth-century Germany. (Indeed, Count Brandenburg himself had been among the 'knights' who disported themselves so grandly at the Festival of the White Rose in 1829.) To a great extent, of course, the medieval revival in Prussia – Gothic or otherwise – after the late eighteenth century simply represented a variation on a larger European theme, and even Frederick the Great himself had occasionally made bows in that direction. The Nauen Gate in Potsdam, for example, was built at his behest in 1770 and represented the first Gothic Revival structure to be built on Prussian territory. (That gate has recently been restored, amid some controversy, to its original eighteenth-century colours.) In Prussia as in other European states, aspects of the medieval revival were appropriated by the ruling dynasty and allied elites on behalf of what can be described as a monarchical-conservative ideological project. In the case of Prussia, that project took the form of an attempt to create a new kind of popular monarchism and to generate new forms of popular support for monarchical values in a state which was itself largely artificial, which between 1806 and 1813 had only barely survived the challenge of revolutionary and Napoleonic France, and which after 1815 acquired new territories in western Germany – that is, in the largely Catholic Rhineland and Westphalia – which were difficult politically and culturally to digest. The ideological project of the Hohenzollerns and their allies thus reflected a kind of offensive strategy of conservative defensiveness that was widespread at many European courts after Waterloo. An essentially modern political project, one which reflected the political, cultural, and social realities of the nineteenth century, it nevertheless made frequent use of supposedly medieval symbols, allusions, ceremonies, and traditions, including public festivals coordinated by and focused on the King and his court.

In a brilliant and now famous analysis of festivals during the French Revolution, the French historian Mona Ozouf has shown how such occasions could channel, articulate, and shape the political discourse of

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[6] Brandenburg to Frederick William IV, 4 September 1850, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz Berlin, ehemalige Merseburger Bestände (hereafter: GStAPK [M]), Brandenburg-Preußisches Hausarchiv (hereafter: BPH), Rep. 50 J Nr. 212 Bl. 74.

a revolutionary age.[7] But it was not only revolutionaries, with their liberty trees, classical evocations of Virtue, Nature, and Supreme Beings, or allusions to Roman martial glories, who understood the power of ritualized, shared mass experience in a time of rapid change and revolutionary upheaval. As the historian James Brophy has most recently reminded us, well into the nineteenth century popular festivals could be used both by bourgeois liberals and by traditional artisanal groups as occasions for political expression or protest.[8] Moreover, many European conservatives were aware that, in an age of ideology, they too were now required to adapt older forms of monarchical ritual to new ends or purposes. Very often, this involved the appropriation of specifically medieval motifs and models in an attempt to lay the foundations for a new kind of popular, anti-revolutionary monarchism.

One of the monarchs who was most effective at this ritualistic appropriation of the medieval past was Frederick William IV, whom we have already encountered as the overweight Crown Prince in 1829, and who reigned as King of Prussia from 1840 to 1861. For generations Frederick William has been described in the historical literature as a 'Romantic on the throne'. And, indeed, not only was he typically 'Romantic' in his personal inclinations and in his artistic enthusiasms but also in his political views. After 1815 he relentlessly advocated an organic-conservative, Christian, estatist-corporative monarchical restoration as the only antidote to what he liked to call the 'revolution, that monster' – by which he meant such things as parliamentarism, individualism, secularism, representative institutions, and 'mechanistic', 'French-modern' constitutions.[9] Among other things, for decades he dreamed of restoring the Holy Roman Empire, which had disappeared in 1806 as a result of the machinations of Bonaparte: the man who, in the eyes of Frederick William, represented the bestial incarnation of revolution in its purest form.[10] At the same time, there can be no doubt

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[7] Mona Ozouf, *Festivals and the French Revolution*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988).

[8] James M. Brophy, 'Carnival and Citizenship: The Politics of Carnival Culture in the Prussian Rhineland, 1823–1848', *Journal of Social History*, 30 (1997), 874–904; idem, 'Mirth and Subversion: Carnival in Cologne, 1815–1848', *History Today*, 47.7 (July 1997), 42–48.

[9] Crown Prince Frederick William (IV) to Prince John of Saxony, 31 May 1832, in *Briefwechsel zwischen König Johann von Sachsen und und den Königen Friedrich Wilhelm IV. und Wilhelm I. von Preußen*, ed. by Johann Georg, Herzog zu Sachsen (Leipzig: Quelle & Meyer, 1911), p. 127.

[10] For a thorough discussion of Frederick William's political views that grounds him in the political world of German Romanticism, see Frank-Lothar Kroll, *Friedrich*

that Frederick William's political and aesthetic vision – what I have elsewhere called his 'monarchical project' – went beyond Romanticism.[11] In his determination to rejuvenate Christianity by embracing the traditions of the early church, and in his enthusiasm for a society based on corporate rights, privileges, and liberties, the King of Prussia was an unabashed 'medievalist'.[12] Throughout his entire adult life, Frederick William IV regarded the Middle Ages not simply as a source of aesthetic and spiritual renewal but also as the historical foundation upon which he hoped to rebuild the Prussian state and regenerate Prussian society.

But Frederick William was more than simply a retrograde legitimist, frustrated absolutist, or dreamy nostalgic. He understood that the so-called 'monarchical principle' required ideological justification in the modern mass age. Accordingly, one of his strategies was to modernize and transform older rituals, including court festivals, and to invent new forms of public display and monarchical representation, thereby creating a new kind of public festival, one designed to advertise and popularize monarchical values as an alternative to the values proclaimed by the great secular festivals of the French Revolution which Ozouf describes, and which had been echoed in Germany by the famous Wartburg and Hambach festivals of 1817 and 1832.[13]

To illustrate this point more clearly, and to reach some conclusions about them, let us turn to several examples of nineteenth-century Prussian festivals that were organized around the King and court and that made use of specifically medieval themes or references. They include the Festival of the White Rose itself, in 1829; the ceremonies of homage and fealty in Königsberg in September 1840; and the Cologne Cathedral festivals of 1842, 1848, and 1855.

As was noted above, the occasion for the Festival of the White Rose was the birthday of the Russian Empress, a Prussian princess who was visiting her birthplace in 1829. Like many of their contemporaries who had been born between 1790 and 1800, Princess Charlotte (to use her original name before her marriage to the later Russian tsar) and her older brother, the Crown Prince, had been powerfully influenced as adolescents by the work of Friedrich de la Motte-Fouqué (1777–

Wilhelm IV. und das Staatsdenken der deutschen Romantik (Berlin: Colloquium, 1990).

[11] Barclay, *Frederick William IV*, passim.

[12] Frederick William IV's medievalism is quite consistent with Leslie Workman's descriptions of that concept. See, for example, Leslie J. Workman, 'Editorial', *Studies in Medievalism*, 3.1 (Fall 1987), p. 1.

[13] Franz Schnabel, *Deutsche Geschichte im neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, vol. 4: *Die religiösen Kräfte*, 3rd edn (Freiburg: Herder, 1955), pp. 156–57.

1843). The scion of a Huguenot family that had moved to the Mark Brandenburg after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Fouqué specialized in sweeping and dramatic medieval epics – most notably *Der Zauberring* (*The Magic Ring*) – that captured the imagination of an entire generation of German readers. In her own medieval enthusiasms Charlotte had taken the white rose as her personal device, as well as the nickname 'Blanchefleur'. And now, years later, the white rose served as the emblem of the festival at the Neues Palais in Potsdam.

The details of the festival were worked out by Charlotte's uncle, Duke Carl of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, a man who was particularly devoted to grand royal ceremonies. It consisted of three parts, of which the first, the 'medieval' *Ritterspiel*, is of greatest interest to us. (It was followed later in the day by a series of allegorical *tableaux vivants* and then by a court ball in the palace.) The tournament itself was specifically designed as a form of public entertainment. In the fulsome words of one official description,

> With a most lively joy that is beautifully rooted in love for the King and for His house, the public heard the news that it too would be privileged to witness this part of the festival. This also offered the public an opportunity to greet the revered daughter of the King one more time before her departure. Beginning early in the day, a colourful crowd streamed onto the roads that led to the Neues Palais, while on the previous day it seemed that all Berlin had made its way to Potsdam.[14]

The judges of the tournament were Duke Carl and Prince Frederick of the Netherlands. The festival began with a fanfare and a drum roll that signaled the Russian Empress's arrival. A chief herald then received her permission to be paid homage by several groups of 'knights'. Thereupon, to the continued accompaniment of fanfares, the first four 'knights' appeared: that is, the Crown Prince Frederick William and his three brothers, Princes William, Carl, and Albrecht. The Crown Prince was accompanied by the official banner of Prussia and was followed by two pages who carried his lance and his shield. The knights wore armour of light silver or gold, over which was a knee-length tunic, emblazoned with each individual's own heraldic device, as well as an armband in the colours of each knight's lady. The four princes undertook a series of events with lance, sword, and spear, after which they left the scene and were replaced by the next four knights,

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[14] Quoted in Ekhart Berckenhagen and Gretel Wagner, *Der bunte Rock in Preußen. Militär- und Ziviluniformen 17. bis 20. Jahrhundert in Zeichnungen, Stichen und Photographien aus dem Bestand der Kunstbibliothek Berlin* (Berlin: Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz, 1981), p. 200.

until finally all forty knights participating in the event had done their part. Then they came together into a single quadrille, again involving activities with lance and sword, followed by a concluding parade of all the knights. The judges, who had been counting points, then awarded the various victors' prizes.[15]

Although it was in some ways the most consciously 'medieval' of the festivals that are being described here, the Festival of the White Rose was also one of the least overtly political or ideological, though there can be no doubt that it represented at once a dynastic spectacle and a reaffirmation of the conservative, post-Napoleonic alliance of the eastern monarchies, Prussia and Russia. It was also symptomatic of its times. As the cultural historian Heinz Biehn has pointed out, builders of neo-Gothic castles, who abounded in those days, often liked to include lists for tournaments on the grounds of their estates; the park of Laxenburg near Vienna and the Löwenburg near Kassel are examples.[16] The Festival of the White Rose also offers comparisons with other tournament reenactments of the same era, such as the famous Eglinton tournament of 1839 in Scotland that Ian Anstruther has so delightfully described.[17]

The ceremony of homage (*Huldigung*) to the new King, Frederick William IV, in Königsberg in September 1840 contained much more obvious ideological messages. Prussia was, as we have already seen, a new kingdom by the standards of other European states, and it completely lacked any tradition of sacral coronation ceremonies; indeed, Frederick I, the first 'King in Prussia', had been the only Prussian monarch until that date to stage an official coronation.[18]

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[15] The above account is largely based on Barclay, *Frederick William IV*, pp. 1–2. Cf. Ernst Lewalter, *Friedrich Wilhelm IV. Das Schicksal eines Geistes* (Berlin: Kiepenheuer, 1938), pp. 305–6; and Berckenhagen and Wagner, *Rock*, pp. 198–201.

[16] Heinz Biehn, *Residenzen der Romantik* (Munich: Prestel, 1970), pp. 56–63, 82–95.

[17] Ian Anstruther, The Knight and the Umbrella: An Account of the Eglinton Tournament 1839 (London: Bles, 1963).

[18] William I was the second, in 1861. See Heinz Duchhardt, 'Die preußische Königskrönung von 1701. Ein europäisches Modell?', in *Herrscherweihe und Königskrönung im frühneuzeitlichen Europa*, ed. by Heinz Duchhardt (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1983), pp. 82–95; Walter Bußmann, 'Die Krönung Wilhelms I. am 18. Oktober 1861. Eine Demonstration des Gottesgnadentums im preußischen Verfassungsstaat', in *Politik und Konfession. Festschrift für Konrad Repgen zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. by Dieter Albrecht, Hans Günter Hockerts, Paul Mikat, and Rudolf Morsey (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1983), pp. 189–212; and David E. Barclay, 'Ritual, Ceremonial, and the "Invention" of a Monarchical Tradition in Nineteenth-Century Prussia', in *European Monarchy: Its Evolution and Practice from Roman Antiquity to Modern Times*, ed. by Heinz Duchhardt, Richard A. Jackson, and David Sturdy (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1992), pp. 217–19.

Other rituals had, however, been retained by subsequent monarchs, most notably the homage in Königsberg of the estates of East and West Prussia (which lay outside the boundaries of the old Empire and of the newer German Confederation), followed later in Berlin by the homage of the other estates of the realm. Accordingly, in late August 1840 Frederick William set out for the eastern parts of his kingdom, accompanied by a large retinue of adjutants, court officials, and members of the royal family.[19]

The events in Königsberg really consisted of two separate functions. First, on 9 September the provincial diet of the province of Prussia, arranged by estates, gathered together as a special 'diet of homage' (*Huldigungslandtag*), presented a memorial to the King, and then was confirmed in certain antique privileges.[20] Having been preceded by glittering public dinners, concerts, and regattas, that ceremony was followed by a public festival with five thousand guests which included elaborate *tableaux vivants* depicting scenes from East Prussian history, with a heavy emphasis, not surprisingly, on the deeds of the Teutonic Knights. The spectacle was preceded by an allegorical representation of the *Jungfrau Borussia* with helmet and shield. The first actual tableau depicted a scene from the year 1228: 'Bishop Christian leads the first Christians to *Landmeister* Hermann Balk'. On either side of the main tableau were smaller scenes: 'Bishop Adalbert baptizes a heathen woman', and 'A Prussian, hurling a mace at the Bishop, is restrained by a maiden'. The second tableau carried the story to 1370, with the 'Battle of Rudau. The *Ordensmarschall*, Schindekop, lies wounded in the middle; next to him is Grand Master Winrich von Kniprode'. Again, flanking the main scene on either side were smaller depictions of 'The Christian faith with a small boy' and 'King Ottokar of Bohemia founds the city of Königsberg'. And so they continued, down to 1679 and 1705, establishing a clear linkage between the medieval history of East Prussia and the more recent arrival of the Hohenzollerns.

On the following day, the actual oath of homage took place in the courtyard of the royal palace. Gathered around the throne were some seventeen thousand spectators as well as the representatives of the estates. After their solemn oath, the King for his part swore to be 'a righteous judge, a loyal, careful, and merciful Prince, a Christian

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[19] GStAPK (M), Geheimes Zivilkabinett 2.2.1. Nr. 32564, Bl. 31ᵛ–32ᵛ, 107–10, 198ᵛ–99ᵛ.

[20] Herbert Obenaus, *Anfänge des Parlamentarismus in Preußen bis 1848* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1984), p. 528.

King.'[21] After the conclusion of the celebrations in Königsberg, Frederick William returned to Berlin to participate in another ceremony of homage, this one, however, largely devoid of medieval symbolism and pageantry. The most colossal stage for that kind of pageantry, though, was provided by Cologne Cathedral, in the far west of the kingdom. In September 1842 Frederick William IV gathered with the Queen and leading members of the Prussian court, prominent citizens of Cologne, and dignitaries of the Catholic church to lay the cornerstone that would officially mark the resumption of work on the cathedral, which of course had been suspended for generations.[22] In a famous essay on Cologne Cathedral as a national monument, Thomas Nipperdey has shown how the cathedral was used as a symbol of nationalist aspirations in nineteenth-century Germany.[23] Frederick William himself was a devoted patriot, though he sought to empty those feelings of their 'Jacobin' or 'revolutionary' content and channel them in a conservative monarchical, dynastic, hierarchical, and corporative direction. (Thus, as we have already noted, throughout his life he yearned for a restoration of the defunct Empire, which, he was convinced, would be the greatest power of Europe if it were resurrected.) For decades as Crown Prince, Frederick William IV had fervently supported the idea of completing the cathedral, for such a project would symbolize several things simultaneously: it would symbolize the unity of Germans and the uniqueness of their national traditions, rooted in the corporative traditions of the Middle Ages; it would symbolize the effective integration of the largely Catholic Rhineland into the Prussian state, which had acquired these territories in 1815; and it would encourage, Frederick William hoped, new feelings of attachment among the local population to his own alien, Protestant dynasty. Accordingly, after ascending the throne he continued to support the cathedral project, and on 4 September 1842

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[21] See the detailed, if fulsome, account in Karl Streckfuß, *Der Preußen Huldigungsfest, nach amtlichen und andern sichern Nachrichten und eigener Anschauung zusammengestellt* (Berlin: Enslin'sche Buchhandlung [Ferdinand Müller]; E. H. Schroeder, Buch- u. Kunsthändler, 1840), pp. 29–58, and *Beilagen* A–D; also the documents in GStAPK, BPH Rep. 50 Nr. 205, and GStAPK (M), Geheimes Zivilkabinett 2.2.1. Nr. 32564, Bl. 237–40, 243. Cf. Barclay, *Frederick William IV*, pp. 52–53.

[22] For a detailed study of the efforts to complete Cologne Cathedral in the nineteenth century, and especially of the critical role of the brothers Sulpiz and Melchior Boisserée, see W. D. Robson-Scott, *The Literary Background of the Gothic Revival in Germany: A Chapter in the History of Taste* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965).

[23] Thomas Nipperdey, 'Der Kölner Dom als Nationaldenkmal', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 233 (1981), 595–613.

he was present for the official ceremony of resumption of work on the cathedral.

This public festival, like the ones that followed it in 1848, 1855, and 1880, was a completely 'modern' event: that is, it was not a re-creation of a medieval spectacle, like the 1829 festival; nor was it associated with older forms of monarchical ritual, like the festivals connected with the ceremonies of homage. Rather, it used a medieval backdrop, and medieval associations, to deliver a very modern kind of message. On 4 September, after attending both Evangelical church services and a pontifical mass in the cathedral itself, the King participated in the dedication of the new cornerstone. A crane which was being used to help complete the cathedral towers was surmounted by a huge wooden black eagle, the symbol of Prussia. The King then surprised and delighted the public with one of those stirring speeches which had become his speciality. (Frederick William IV was the first Prussian monarch who ever delivered public speeches to his subjects.) In one of the best public performances in a long and self-consciously public career, the King now hailed the 'spirit of German unity and strength' which had sustained the cathedral project from the beginning, and concluded with an emotional salute to the ancient city of Cologne which elicited an ecstatic, even tearful response from the audience. In short, with the so-called *Dombaufest* the King of Prussia had successfully orchestrated a gigantic ideological festival based on the popular affirmation of monarchical values, an emphasis on the union of throne and altar, and on the adaptation of nationalist symbols to monarchic and dynastic ends.[24]

In later years Frederick William IV returned to Cologne to participate in two more official festivals connected with the cathedral. In August 1848 the Archbishop of Cologne officially dedicated the entire cathedral, which, though still not complete, had expanded to its final external dimensions. That occasion, in the midst of the revolutionary upheavals that were sweeping through Europe, represented a particularly important opportunity for Frederick William to demonstrate both his continuing popularity – he was jubilantly greeted by large crowds in the city – and to affirm the anti-revolutionary alliance of Catholic church and Protestant dynasty. Finally, in 1855 he again visited the city to participate in festivities connected with the opening of the famous Wallraff-Richartz Museum (which houses a large collection of late medieval paintings by Rhenish masters) and the dedication of the south façade of the cathedral. That event was commemorated in frescoes by Eduard von Steinle that were

[24] For the most thorough recent account of the *Dombaufest*, see Thomas Parent, *Die Hohenzollern in Köln* (Cologne: Greven, 1981), pp. 50–62.

destroyed in the Second World War. (Thankfully, preliminary studies have survived.) The first sketch, which was never executed, in a sense depicts both King and Archbishop, and royal family and clergy, as equals; and, rather like David's depiction of the Napoleonic coronation of 1804, it includes people who were not present at the scene. The second sketch, which was in fact the basis for the actual fresco series, puts the Archbishop in the background, puts the King in uniform, and more strongly emphasizes the participation of Cologne's bourgeoisie.[25]

What can we conclude from these examples about the representation of the Middle Ages at court festivals or court-sponsored festivals in nineteenth-century Prussia? First, the Middle Ages were consistently depicted as a relatively conflict-free time of harmony, mutual respect, and support between sovereign and estates. That mutuality was constantly emphasized in various ways, as the homage ceremonies in Königsberg or the throne and altar festivities in Cologne suggested.

Moreover, the pluralism of medieval society was supposedly both a product and an expression of that mutuality; and it was frequently contrasted to the leveling and egalitarian 'absolutism' of modern times. Second, Mona Ozouf has written that the 'Revolutionary festival referred to a world of perfect intelligibility, order, and stability.'[26] Many court festivals in nineteenth-century Prussia tried to do the same thing; but the orderly world that they projected was of a rather different sort, one that projected and tried to justify corporative and hierarchical values. Third, court festivals and other public ceremonies in nineteenth-century Prussia emphasized historically legitimizing lines of *continuity* between the past and the monarchic-conservative, dynastic present. Thus the Middle Ages played an important, but by no means an exclusive, role in a larger, rather eclectic project of ideological, historicizing legitimation. The various *tableaux vivants* which have been described here, and which were a popular feature of court festivals, especially in the first part of the nineteenth century, are good examples. We have seen how they often included medieval motifs; those motifs rarely stood by themselves, but usually formed part of a larger program tracing the history of a region, and its Christian and monarchical loyalties, from remote times to the more recent past. In short, at public court festivals in nineteenth-century Prussia the Middle Ages figured as an extremely important but by no means exclusive source of dynastic and political legitimation: even for Frederick William IV, a man who yearned for a return to the values and institutions of the Middle Ages. Fourth, and finally, many

[25] Parent, pp. 63–76.

[26] Ozouf, *Festivals*, p. 281.

historians and social scientists in recent years have paid close attention to the 'invention of traditions' in modern societies.[27] We saw at the outset how modern the Prussian monarchy was, and how comparatively devoid of real legitimizing traditions. The appropriation of medieval and historic symbols by that monarchy would seem to be a particularly good example of the invention of tradition in the service of conservative ideological stabilization.

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[27] *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

'DEUTSCHLAND, DEUTSCHLAND, ÜBER ALLES'? WALTHER VON DER VOGELWEIDE, HOFFMANN VON FALLERSLEBEN AND THE 'SONG OF THE GERMANS': MEDIEVALISM, NATIONALISM AND/OR FASCISM

ULRICH MÜLLER

Prologue: Medieval singers I – Peire Vidal, 'Ira mortals cozens'

> I find the Germans without grace and like uneducated common folk. If one of them tries to be courtly and gracious, it is a deadly nuisance and annoyance. Their language sounds like the barking of dogs.

THESE WORDS, TRULY NOT very friendly about Germans, were composed and sung at the end of the 12th century by the Trobador Peire Vidal, when the German Emperor Henry VI was on an expedition against the Italian city of Pisa (1194–1195) – in Provençal:

> Alamans trob deschauzitz e vilans
> E quand negus si feing esser cortes,
> Ira mortals cozens et enois es;
> E lor parlars sembla lairars de cans.[1]

These words clearly demonstrate a medieval phenomenon which I would call 'linguistic nationalism'. Historians and philologists have tried to convince us that there has never been anything like nationalism during the Middle Ages – and they are both right and wrong: As the Middle Ages did not know, roughly speaking, the concept of a nation (meaning: one language, one country, one nation), it is clear that there cannot have been 'nationalism' in the modern sense. And as nationalism and nationalistic ideas are always part of fascism, one could conclude that the Middle Ages have nothing to do with fascism – and as a medievalist I might be tempted to terminate my paper hereby, leaving the unpleasant topic of fascism to the colleagues of other academic disciplines.

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[1] *La Poesie de Peire Vidal*, ed. by Joseph Anglade, 2nd edn (Paris: Champion, 1966), song XXVII; see also the tornada of song XXXVIII.

But: doing so would be an unfair strategy. The Middle Ages and Medievalism have much to do with modern ideologies, and not little with modern fascism, because they have often been used to prove the relevance of their concepts and ideas. Some topics of the German Middle Ages are ill-famed for their fascistic application, i.e., the myth of the Nibelungs,[2] but also the myth of the grail quest and even a medieval song-writer like Walther von der Vogelweide.

There is no doubt that Walther's song 'Ir sult sprechen willekomen' ('You should welcome me') was one of the main sources for the 'Song of the Germans', that Lied with the notorious lines 'Deutschland, Deutschland, über alles' ('Germany, Germany, above all!'), i.e., the national anthem of the Germans and of Germany of today. Walther's song was probably written for the ducal court in Vienna, when he arrived in 1203 at the conjugal festival of Duke Leopold VI, again seeking patronage from the Austrian duke. And the 'Lied der Deutschen' by Hoffmann von Fallersleben, written in 1841, also has a strong Austrian connection without which the complicated story of that Lied is not understandable.

My following remarks about Walther von der Vogelweide and the 'Song of the Germans' are divided into five sections. After 'Some Preliminary Ideas' (1) I shall discuss Walther's song (2), Hoffmann von Fallerleben's 'Song of the Germans' (3), and its reception and political use in the 19th and 20th centuries (4); at the end I will try to deduce some conclusions (5). Regarding this subject and all related problems, I am deeply indebted to previous studies, particularly those by Wilhelm Nickel, Kurt Herbert Halbach, Rolf Ehnert, Peter Stein, Roland Schlick, Sigrid Neureiter-Lackner, and – above all – Peter Wapnewski.[3]

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[2] Cf. Hermann Göring's address to the *Wehrmacht*: 3 February 1943; printed in Werner Wunderlich, *Der Schatz des Drachentödters. Materialien zur Wirkungsgeschichte des Nibelungenliedes* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1977), p. 96.

[3] Nickel, *Sirventes und Spruchdichtung* (Berlin: Mayer & Müller, 1907); Halbach, 'Walther von der Vogelweide, Hoffmann von Fallersleben und Schiller/Hölderlin. Rezeption und Convergenz. Zu Walther's Preislied', in *Mittelalter-Rezeption I*, ed. by Jürgen Kühnel, *et al.* (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1979), pp. 40–62; Ehnert, 'Walther – Lehrer der Deutschen. Zur Rezeption Walthers von der Vogelweide in der Dichtung und Kunst des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts', in *Mittelalter-Rezeption I*, pp. 225–44; Stein, *Politisches Bewußtsein und künstlerischer Gestaltungswille in der politischen Lyrik 1780–1848* (Hamburg: Lüdke, 1971); Schlick, *Hoffmans von Fallersleben vaterländische und gesellschaftskritische Lyrik* (Stuttgart: Heinz, 1981); Neureiter-Lackner, *Schöpferische Rezeption mittelalterlicher Lieder und Dichtersänger in der Gegenwart 1945–1989. Analyse und Dokumentation* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Salzburg, 1990); Wapnewski, 'Die Deutschen und ihr Lied', *Zeit-Magazin*, 28 December 1989, p. 16–21, and 'Die Deutschen und ihr Lied. Eine

1. Some Preliminary Ideas ('Vor-Überlegungen')

I remember an ardent discussion during the so-called 'Wende' of 1989 and 1990 about the German national anthem, performed and documented in the weekly *Die Zeit*. When listening to people arguing about this topic, I often had the impression that there were a lot of misapprehensions, even a lack of knowledge, particularly about the original political context of this anthem and its medieval roots. That is why I decided to contribute to this Festschrift for Leslie Workman and address its international, English-speaking readers with some remarks about the story, or better the legend of this famous song which played such an important rôle in German and European history, especially throughout the 20th century.[4]

Naturally I will – and can only – do this from my individual point of view, i.e. as a German-speaking medievalist who was just four and a half years old when the Second World War ended: who was born and raised in Western Germany, and later as a young academic impressed by and sometimes involved in the turbulence of 1968 and the following years; who has been teaching since 1973 and living in Salzburg/Austria continually since 1976, i.e. in a country that has been explicitly neutral but has a strong Western orientation (and the political history of which has much to do with the origins of the 'Song of the Germans'); who for these reasons has had the opportunity to form extensive connections with colleagues in the various German-speaking countries. If I take all these circumstances into account I consider myself in a special situation – somewhere in-between.

Nation auf der Suche nach sich selbst und ihrer Hymne', in *Das neue Europa*, ed. by Margarita Mathiopoulos (Bonn and Berlin: Bouvier, 1992), pp. 290–319, and in Peter Wapnewski, *Zusammenschreibungen. Gesammelte Schriften* (Hildesheim and Zurich: Olms, 1994), pp. 477–506.

[4]An early version of this paper was presented at the 1994 Conference, 'Fascism and the Institution of Literature', University of Virginia, Charlottesville,VA., 1994. Later I discussed it with colleagues and students in Salzburg, and at the Universities of Fes (Maroc) and Tunis. I also used its main ideas for our monograph about Walther von der Vogelweide (Walther von der Vogelweide. Epoche – Werk – Wirkung, ed. by Horst Brunner and others (Munich: Beck, 1996), pp. 236–40). – I am very grateful to my colleague and friend William C. McDonald (Charlottesville, VA) for improving my English text.

2. Medieval poets II: Walther von der Vogelweide, 'Ir sult sprechen willekomen!'

Walther's song of five stanzas, 'Ir sult sprechen willekomen' (L 56,14), is transmitted in four medieval manuscripts; in ms. A (*Kleine Heidelberger Liederhandschrift*), the oldest of them, one will find the song as follows:[5]

1 Ir sult sprechen willekomen:
der iu maere bringet, daz bin ich.
allez. daz ir habt vernomen,
des gar ein wint, nu vraget mich.
Ich wil aber miete.
wirt min lon iht guot,
ich sage vil lihte, daz iu sanfte tuot.
seht, waz man mir eren biete.

1 You should welcome me, for it is I who bring you news. All that you have heard is nothing: now ask me. But I wish a reward. If my compensation is good, I will tell you something that will please you greatly. Now see to it that you remunerate me well.

2 Ich wil tiutschen vrowen sagen
solchiu maere, daz si deste baz
al der welte suln behagen,
ane groze miete tuon ich daz.
Waz wolde ich ze lone?
si sint mir ze her.
so bin ich gevüege und bitte si nihtes mer,
wan daz si mich grüezen schone.

2 (Having won the attention of his audience, Walther begins his message by promising to tell German women how they can please all the world. He will do that without demanding any reward, for they are too exalted for him to request any more than a sweet greeting. He continues:)

3 Ich han lande vil gesehen
unde nam der besten gerne war.
übel müeze mir geschehen,
künde ich ie min herze bringen dar,
Daz ime wol gevallen
wolte fremede site.
waz hulfe mich, obe ich unrehte strite?
tiuschiu zuht gat vor in allen.

3 I have seen many lands and observed the best of them, and I would deserve ill luck if ever I should let my heart be pleased by foreign customs. What good would it do me to assert such a falsehood? German manners surpass them all.

4 Von der Elbe unz an den Rin

4 From the Elbe to the Rhine and

[5]Text: *Walther von der Vogelweide. Leich, Lieder, Sangsprüche*, ed. by Karl Lachmann, 14th edn, rev. by Christoph Cormeau (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1996). The other mss. (C: Große Heidelberger 'Manessische' Liederhandschrift); E: Würzburger Handschrift/U[xx]: Wolfenbüttel fragments (only 4 stanzas)) give a different sequence of the stanzas, but more or less the same text; ms. C adds a 6th stanza in which the singer addresses his lady – this 'tornada'-like stanza might have been dropped at later performances of the song. Wolfgang Mohr ('Die "vrouwe" Walthers von der Vogelweide', *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, 68 (1967), 1–10; also in Mohr, *Gesammelte Aufsätze II. Lyrik* (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1983), pp. 173–84), proposes that the lady might be a metaphor for the ducal court in Vienna.

her wider unz an der Unger lant,
da mügen wol die besten sin,
die ich in der welte han erkant.
Kan ich rehte schowen
guot gelaz und lip,
sem mir got, so swüer ich wol, daz hie diu wip
bezzer sint danne ander frowen.

back here to Hungary these are the best people I have known in the world. If you can judge good conduct and beauty correctly, so help me God, I would swear that the women here are better than ladies elsewhere.

5 Tiusche man sint wol gezogen,
rehte als engel sint diu wip getan.
swer sie schultet, derst gat betrogen:
ich enkan sin anders niht verstan.
Tugent und reine minne,
swer die suochen wil,
der sol komen in unser lant, da ist wunne vil.
lange müeze ich leben dar inne!

5 German men are well bred, and the women are like angels. If anyone censures them, then he is deceived, or else I can not understand him. If anyone is seeking virtue and pure love, let him come into our land, where there are many delights. Long may I live in it![6]

Most modern medievalists agree that the beginning of the song is an ironic allusion to Reinmar der Alte, Walther's poetic rival, and that the laudatio to the German gentlemen and ladies was provoked by Trobadors like Peire Vidal. The so-called 'Fluß-Formel' ('river formula') can also be found in Occitane songs, and Peire Vidal (song XIX) even combines – like Walther – the praise of a country ('la Proensa') and of its ladies with that very 'river formula': 'You will never find a better country than that between Rhone and Vence and from the sea to the Durance, and nowhere a more pleasant life.'

This means that Walther ingeniously uses motifs of the Trobadors for defending and exalting the Germans. Like Vidal he uses the 'river formula' to de-/circumscribe a region: the German-speaking territory between Elbe and Rhine and 'back here to Hungary', i.e., the border between the Duchy of Austria and the Kingdom of Hungary, only a few kilometres east of Vienna, where the song was probably performed for the first time. Walther's aim is to charm and cheer his courtly audience, asking in a very polite manner for support and assistance. This means: 'Ir sult sprechen willekomen' is an introductory song which combines the techniques of a 'Preislied' and a 'Bittlied'. Walther's song was well-known in his era, because Ulrich von Liechtenstein ('Frauendienst' stanza 774ff.), some years later, quoted the first stanza when telling how he was welcomed by the messenger of his lady.

The American philologist George F. Jones, who published in 1968 one of the most important monographs on Walther, concludes his

[6] Translation according to George F. Jones, *Walther von der Vogelweide* (New York: Twayne, 1968), pp. 77–8 (stanza 2: only summary).

interpretation thus: 'The song does not represent aggressive chauvinism, which was unknown to Walther or other Germans of his time. Rather it seems to be an answer to some unfavorable remarks about the Germans, possibly to some song by the Provençal troubadour Peire Vidal, who was then at the court of Hungary and spoke unkindly of the Germans'.[7] But one should add that Walther, of course, is no modern nationalist, but he knew – as Peire Vidal did – the strategy which had been common in Europe since Greek antiquity and which could be called proto-nationalistic: to denounce other people by virtue of their language as 'barbarians', which means people who utter syllables and words that nobody can understand and which sound exotic, strange and backward.

Walther uses this technique of linguistic invective in a stanza (L 34,4) which was very well-known and influential: when he addressed Pope Innocence III in a very aggressive manner, condemned the papal politics and also denounced the Pope as an 'Ausländer', an Italian unable to speak correctly (i.e., German).[8]

The leftist Franz Josef Degenhardt, one of the most famous song-writers in modern West Germany, was so impressed by Walther's 'agitatorial' refinement that he re-used this stanza in the 1970s for a song against Pope Paul VI and against the President of the World Bank (albeit only partly and without any systematic linguistic innuendos).

Like all of the medieval German lyricists, Walther was forgotten for many centuries – until the Swiss authors Bodmer and Breitinger published the texts of the most valuable and most comprehensive manuscript of medieval German songs: the *Manessische Liederhandschrift* in 1748 and 1758. And from that time dates the modern revival of MHG lyrics, a revival that was no overwhelming success but which was the reason why nearly all pupils of a Gymnasium in Germany or Austria learned at least some lines of MHG lyrics.

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[7] Jones, p. 78.

[8] See the articles by John F. Flood, Stephen Barbour, Patrick Stevenson, Werner Hüller, and Alan Kirkness (all in English) about the political role of the German language, national identity, and 'foreign languages', in 'Das unsichtbare Band der Sprache'. *Studies in German Language and Linguistic History in Memory of Leslie Seiffert*, ed. John L. Flood and others (Stuttgart: Heinz, 1993).

3. 'Das Lied der Deutschen' – 'The Song of the Germans'

The poets of the so-called 'Göttinger Hain' were the first who tried to revitalize the old MHG songs by imitating and quoting from them, but their efforts were in vain. For instance, Johann Wilhelm Ludwig Gleim, one of the most important 'Hain'-poets used Walther's lines for a new song, called 'Der deutsche Mann' ('The German Man', ca. 1775).[9]

More than sixty years later, on the August 26, 1841, one more song using Walther was conceived: Hoffmann von Fallersleben's 'Das Lied der Deutschen' ('The Song of the Germans'):

'Das Lied der Deutschen' ('The Song of the Germans')

1 Deutschland, Deutschland über alles,
Über alles in der Welt,
Wenn es stets zu Schutz und Trutze
Brüderlich zusammenhält,
Von der Maas bis an die Memel,

Von der Etsch bis an den Belt –
Deutschland, Deutschland über alles,
Über alles in der Welt.

2 Deutsche Frauen, deutsche Treue,
Deutscher Wein und deutscher Sang
Sollen in der Welt behalten
Ihren alten schönen Klang,
Uns zu edler Tat begeistern
Unser ganzes Leben lang –

1 Germany, Germany, above all,
above all in the world,
if always you are united
in brotherhoods,
between the river Maas and the river Memel,
from the river Etsch to the Balticum –
Germany, Germany, above all,
above all in the world.

2 German women, German faithfulness,
German wine and German song,
they shall preserve their
good old sound,
and inspire us to noble deeds
through all our life –

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[9] 'Der deutsche Mann' (ca. 1775):

1 Der deutsche Mann ist wohlgezogen,
Und wohlgetan das deutsche Weib!
Wer's anders weiß, der ward betrogen,
Dem sing ich: Du, Betrog'ner, bleib',
Du Deines Vaterlandes Schande,
Bleib' *nicht* in Deinem Vaterlande,
Das Dir kein Obdach geben kann;
Zich' aus und werd' ein *fremder* Mann!

2 In vielen Ländern viel gesehen
Hab' ich, bis weit in Asia;
Doch aller Welt muß ich gestehen:
Daß ich das *Bess're* nirgends sah!
Die *deutsche* Zucht hat mir vor allen
Den fremden Sitten wohl gefallen,
Und das ist meiner Reisen *Frucht*,
Daß mir *gefiel* die deutsche Zucht!

3 Wer Tugend such und keusche Liebe,
Der komm' in unser deutsches Land!
Ist nur sein Auge nicht zu trübe,
Seht er sie gehen Hand in Hand
Mit Engelieblichen Geberden
Und wünscht ein deutscher Mann zu werden,
Und hört erschallen himmelan:
'Gottlob, ich bin ein deutscher Mann!'

Deutsche Frauen, deutsche Treue,
Deutscher Wein und deutscher Sang!

3 Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit
Für das deutsche Vaterland!
Danach laßt uns alle streben
Brüderlich mit Herz und Hand.

Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit
Sind des Glückes Unterpfand –
Blüh im Glanze dieses Glückes,

Blühe, deutsches Vaterland!

German women, German faithfulness,
German wine and German song,

3 Unity and justice and freedom
for the German fatherland!
For these let us strive
like brothers with our hearts and hands!
Unity and justice and freedom
are the pledge of such joy –
bloom and prosper in the glory of this bliss,
bloom and prosper, German fatherland.

To appreciate this song in its historical context, one has to understand several facts:

1. The author, August Heinrich Hoffmann, called 'von Fallersleben', was born in Westfalia (in Fallersleben near Hannover), but taught from 1830 on as a Professor of German at the University of Breslau. In 1840 he published in Hamburg (publisher: Joseph Campe) a collection of patriotic songs, called 'Unpolitische Lieder' ('Unpolitical Songs'): the book was a success for the publisher, but Fallersleben became suspect to the Prussian authorities in Breslau.

2. Breslau and Silesia were part of the Habsburg Empire until 1742 when Maria Theresia lost them to Prussia. In two wars (1744/45 and 1756/63) the Habsburg Empire tried to get Silesia back, but failed, and Silesia remained a part of Prussia.

3. After the successful War against Napoleon I (called by the Germans Befreiungskriege, 'Wars of Liberation') the Germans, who lived in a scattered region of mostly feudal territories, gained neither more political rights nor a united country. The years between the Vienna Congress (1814/15) and the European Revolution of 1848 were decades of a Restoration suppressing all political ambitions of the people, and none of the European powers had any interest in a change – nor did the Prussian authorities.

4. When Hoffmann von Fallersleben wrote his German song, he used a famous melody, the Melody of the Habsburg anthem ('Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser, unseren guten Kaiser Franz': 'God save Emperor Franz, our good Emperor Franz').

The words had been conceived by the Austrian theologian Leopold Lorenz Haschka in February 1797, and the song was welcomed, if not commissioned, by the Habsburg government to rival the 'Marseillaise', the anthem of the powerful and threatening French Revolution. Some months later, the famous composer Joseph Haydn, who was very

impressed by the British anthem 'God Save the King' during a visit to London, wrote a melody for it – a melody which Peter Wapnewski called 'a melody of really imperial quality'.[10]

But Fallersleben not only used a prominent Austrian melody full of symbolic meaning, i.e. the melody of the Habsburg Kaiserhymn, but also borrowed from another political Habsburg song, written by Heinrich Joseph Collin in the autumn of 1808, when Austria was engaged in a deadly war against Napoleon I; the line 'Austria above all' from this song became well-known, and, during the Wars of Liberation, Johann Daniel Runge, the brother of the painter Otto Runge, was inspired by these words and changed them into: 'Deutschland über alles'!

Hence, Hoffmann's song is part of a complex political and intertextual network: Using and borrowing words and a political melody from the Habsburg Empire; written in a part of Prussia which had been lost by Habsburg a few decades previously; written by a professor who was suspect to his authorities for his patriotic poems; using words and a melody which were originally conceived against the French Revolution and Napoleon; and – not to be forgotten – quoting the most famous German song-writer of the Middle Ages, Walther von der Vogelweide. Hoffmann von Fallersleben also borrowed the old 'river formula' from Walther, and his words were politically correct and by no means suspicious[11] – in August 1841, but not in later years.

5. Hoffmann von Fallersleben wrote his 'Song of the Germans' neither in a German country, nor in exile (he was exiled from Prussia later, in December 1842); he wrote it on the Isle of Helgoland, which was at that time British (and which became German in 1890, in exchange for the Isle of Zanzibar in German East Africa). Hoffmann paid a short visit to Helgoland in 1841 on a tour to his publisher Campe in Hamburg. He describes in his autobiography how he sold the poem to Campe who had it instantly printed as a Flugblatt (leaflet) – but both of them were soon disappointed with the song's lack of success. For the readers of the 1840's, its contents were neither new nor politically surprising – it was just one patriotic song among many others.[12]

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[10] Peter Wapnewski, 'Die Deutschen und ihr Lied' (1989), p. 20.

[11] See Jost Hermand, 'Zersungenes Erbe. Zur Geschichte des "Deutschlandliedes",' Basis. Jahrbuch für deutsche Gegenwartsliteratur, 7 (1979), 40–62, and Schlick, Hoffmans von Fallerslebens vaterländische und gesellschaftskritische Lyrik.

[12] See also the novel by the 'Liedermacher' (mentioned above) Franz Josef Degenhardt: *August Heinrich Hoffmann, genannt von Fallersleben. Ein Roman.* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 1991).

4. 'Das Deutschlandlied'

So far, so good. But times changed, and the political situation in Europe changed, too. Hoffmann's song, which retained some popularity only among patriotic German students and which was sung to many new melodies,[13] played no great role in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870/1871. The national anthem of the new German Kaiser-Reich was: 'Heil Dir im Siegerkranz' ('Hail to you, by the wreath of victory'!), for the first time performed in Prussian Berlin in 1795 and to the melody of the British 'God Save the King'. When German students, full of patriotic and national enthusiasm, went to war in 1914, they still were singing the old Studentenlied, and it became the unofficial war-song of the young academic soldiers from the German Kaiser-Reich. The song and its words finally now got a national, even nationalistic meaning – especially for the Non-Germans: the 'river formula' now described the farthest borders of a Great German Empire, and the first line finally had a new political meaning: 'Germany is better than other nations and should therefore not only stay above them all, but conquer the rest of the world'.

This was not what Walther or Hoffmann had in mind when they had composed their songs. Walther had defended the German people; both he and Hoffmann praised the German-speaking countries as the best in the world, and Hoffmann von Fallersleben declared that a future Germany, with unity, justice and freedom, would be for him and his compatriots 'above all' ('Deutschland, Deutschland über alles!'). During the First World War these words took on yet another meaning, and, at that time, one could not understand them in any other way – political circumstances had changed dramatically, and the new context provoked a new understanding of the old song.

After the fall of the Kaiser-Reich the new republic was in need of a new national anthem. President Friedrich Ebert, a Social-Democratic, looked for a song which had no connection to the former Empire or to Emperor Wilhelm, and the patriotic Studentenlied, written in 1841 by the later expatriate Hoffmann von Fallersleben, seemed to have the right combination of nationalism and revolutionary tradition. He therefore selected 'Das Lied der Deutschen' as the new national anthem of the new Republic, the Weimar Republic, now called the 'Deutschland-Lied' ('Germany-Song'), probably unaware of the consequences:

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[13] Gunter Quarg, 'Melodien zum Deutschlandlied, gesammelt von Hoffman von Fallersle-ben', *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung*, 38 (1993), 134–36.

The other nations, the Ausland, understood this choice as a signal of nationalistic, even chauvinistic meaning, and again – how could they not? The same words have different meanings at different times and for different people, and this is especially the case with words connected to political emotions.

So far, so bad: The German fascists did not need to reinterpret the national anthem of the Weimar Republic which they despised so much. The modern meaning of the old words fitted their ideology, and they tried to make as much use of them as possible. They just combined it with their own anthem, the Horst-Wessel-Lied 'Die Fahne hoch' ('High fly the flag'), and since 1940 this double-anthem was obligatory.

Suprisingly however, after the defeat of the Nazis, the old anthem survived – and I guess because it was not a fascist song, but a much older song which was merely used – and not even mis-used – by the Nazis.

Still both parts of Germany had problems with that song: In the Eastern part, occupied by the Soviets, the old song was forbidden, and a new national anthem was found in 1949 for the new Democratic Republic of Germany: 'Auferstanden aus Ruinen' ('Resurrected from ruins...'), conceived probably during the war in Moscow by Johannes R. Becher, who was to become Kultusminister of the GDR, with music by Hanns Eisler. But it was not a happy choice for the GDR, as their anthem also had the words: 'Deutschland, einig Vaterland' ('Germany, united fatherland'), which became later politicallly incorrect: The words of the song therefore were no longer used, just the melody, and it was precisely these words which became the funeral song of the GDR in 1989/1990 – together with the slogan 'Wir sind *ein* Volk' ('We are one people'; derived from: '*Wir* sind das Volk', 'We are the people').

The Western allies in 1945 also forbade the singing of the 'Deutschlandlied', and the new Bundesrepublik looked for a new anthem. But it was not possible to establish a song written by Rudolf Alexander Schröder as the new national anthem ('Land des Glaubens, deutsches Land,/ Land der Väter und der Erben': 'Country of faith, German country,/ country of the fathers and their heirs') – and followed the 'Hymnenstreit' ('Quarrel about the anthem'):

In May 1952, Bundespräsident Theodor Heuss reluctantly declared the old song, the 'Deutschlandlied', as the new national anthem, but Adenauer and Heuss negotiated that only the third stanza (about Unity, Justice, Freedom) should be sung at official ceremonies. And one more compromise was necessary when the two parts of Germany were at least united briefly in sports: The short-lived compromise was 'Freude schöner Götterfunken' ('Song of Joy'), with words by

Friedrich Schiller and music by Ludwig van Beethoven (Symphony No. 9, final movement).

In 1990 the national anthem of the Germans, now again united, became once more controversial,[14] and there was a heated discussion among German intellectuals that the political 'Wende' ('change') should be accentuated by a 'Hymnen-Wende' (Change of the hymns). Again, tradition and the 'Deutschlandlied' survived: And the re-united Germany now has the same Hymne like the Federal Republic, with the third stanza of the 'Deutschlandlied' still the only one in official use.[15]

To quote a favorite phrase by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.: 'So It Goes'!

5. Conclusion: Nationalism/Facism?

The 'reception' of Walther von der Vogelweide's 'Ir sult sprechen willekomen' is a long story, not of misunderstandings (as many well-meaning people say), but of necessarily changing understandings:

– Walther's words had in 1203 no national meaning in a modern sense, although they were aimed against unfriendly verses from abroad: they were part of a battle about cultural and linguistic, not national supremacy.

– Around 1800, during the War against the French Revolutionaries and Napoleon I, Walther's lines got a patriotic meaning, and so Hoffmann von Fallersleben used them for a patriotic song. This song, part of a complex political, musical, poetical, i.e. an intertextual network, was for a long time just one patriotic song among many others.

– During the rise of German nationalism, during the nationalism of the Kaiser-Reich, the 'Song of the Germans' was just a Studentenlied. It became important for the young academic soldiers from the German Kaiser-Reich in World War I, and now the words of Walther and of Hoffmannn von Fallersleben also got a new, aggressive and offensive meaning. Ironically, it was the Socialdemocratic President of the Weimar Republic who finally declared it the new national anthem of the new republic. It was now called the 'Deutschlandlied'.

– The Nazis shrewdly used the 'Deutschlandlied' in this new meaning: they did not mis-use it.

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[14] See, for example, Helmut Kohl, *Ich wollte Deutschlands Einheit* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1996), pp. 217, 451, (482).

[15] Sometimes people nevertheless use the politically incorrect complete text which usually arouses political problems; see above.

– After the Second World War all attempts failed to find new anthems for the two parts of Germany, and also for the newly re-united Germany: tradition survived, and it could survive, because the words of Walther and Fallersleben are so flexible, inviting a variety of interpretations. There is no right or wrong understanding of this notorious song, but there are, and there must be, different modes of understanding according to changing political circumstances. The 'Deutschlandlied', with its roots in the Middle Ages, is much older than German fascism. The words of Walther von der Vogelweide and Hoffmann von Fallersleben had, at their times, a proto-nationalistic and patriotic meaning. Later, in the era of nationalism, they inevitably could and had to be understood as nationalistic and even chauvinistic, and therefore they could be extremely well used by the Nazis. But they still survived, due to their much older tradition.

The Germans have, more than other nations, an 'Unmasterable Past' (Charles S. Maier).[16]

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[16] *The Unmasterable Past. History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1988).

ST GEORGE AND THE PENDRAGON

ROGER SIMPSON

Why doe you boast of Arthur and his knightes,
Knowing well how many men have endured fightes?
For besides King Arthur, and Lancelot du Lake,
Or Tristram de Lionel, that fought for ladies' sake;
Read in old histories, and there you shall see
How St George, St George the dragon made to flee.
St George he was for England; St Dennis was for France;
Sing, *Honi soit qui mal y pense.*

THESE ARE THE FIRST lines of a poem named 'St George for England' which was included by Thomas Percy in his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), a collection that was instrumental in forming the canon of 'medieval' balladry for subsequent readers.[1] Though taking its subject from classical and medieval times, 'St George for England' is in form and tone a post-medieval burlesque which swaggeringly asserts St George's superiority not only to Arthur but to a strong international team including Abraham, Hercules, Hannibal, Tamburlaine, Richard Coeur-de-Lion and Henry V. A continuation of the poem, in rougher vein, by John Grubb (1688) vastly extends this list of potential contenders, all of whom are placed firmly in the shade by St George. To adopt such a burlesque tone does not, of course, necessarily signal in England that the writer or speaker disbelieves what is so humorously presented; on the contrary, such a device is frequently a strategy for disarming an anticipated opposition; beneath the apparent mockery there remains a core of approval. Assuming then that St George could be so warmly welcome in such an important collection of ballads, one may well ask why the nineteenth century should have witnessed no 'Georgian' revival to match that of King Arthur. Why was the King preferred to the Saint?

[1] Thomas Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, new edition, ed. by Robert Aris Willmot (London: Routledge, 1867), pp. 556–69.

1. To 1765

In origin, George and Arthur have much in common.[2] The historical authenticity of both has been strongly challenged but, in their assumed temporal setting, they are not widely separated: one being Late Roman, the other early Post Roman. Both are Christian soldiers with strongly pagan associations; both are transformed into patterns of chivalry, slay dragons, die heroically, and achieve a Europe-wide reputation. Occasionally, they have even been specifically linked. St George's cross was, according to the medieval chronicler John Harding, displayed on one of King Arthur's banners;[3] both men are portrayed as leading knights in Spenser's allegorical romance *The Faerie Queene* (1589); while Dryden and Purcell's dramatic opera *King Arthur* (1691) is virtually given a Georgian frame as it begins with the Britons' victory over the Saxons on 23 April (St George's Day) and ends with Honour singing a climactic address to the Saint, the patron of our isle.

Overall, however, in England before the twentieth century the reputation of St George eclipsed that of King Arthur in many key respects. Primarily, there was George's status as a major saint. Within twenty years of his death in AD c.303, churches were being dedicated to him in the Near East, and his legend spread like wildfire as Roman soldiers carried it with them throughout the Empire. Although a Church Council held in the West in AD 494 had attempted to curtail the growth of apocryphal stories about his tortures, miracles and resurrections, the impetus of his cult proved irresistible, and in time he became the patron saint of, for example, England, Portugal, Aragon, Catalonia, Lithuania, and the cities of Venice, Genoa and Barcelona. After 1415, his festival was celebrated in England as a *Festum Duplex* and public holiday, taking its place as an important day in the church calendar. Churches had already been dedicated to him in England since before the Norman Conquest; it is calculated that by 1700 there were about a hundred and twenty ancient foundations honouring him as their patron,[4] and many more followed this pattern throughout the

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[2] For information on the St George legend before the Reformation, I am indebted to Philip Barnes, *St George, Ruskin and the Dragon* (Sheffield: Ruskin Gallery, 1992); Margaret Bulley, *St George for Merrie England* (London: Allen, 1908); David Scott Fox, *St George: The Saint with Three Faces* (Shooter's Lodge, Windsor Forest, Berkshire: Kendal Press, 1983); and G. J. Marcus, *Saint George of England* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1929).

[3] *The Chronicle of John Harding*, ed. by Henry Ellis (London: Rivingtons, 1812), p. 122.

[4] Francis Bond, *Dedications and Patron Saints of English Churches* (London: Oxford University Press, 1914).

eighteenth century, including the new, and socially fashionable, St George's of Hanover Square, London. Arthur, by contrast, received none of this attention.

Nor was George's influence confined to the ecclesiastical sphere: he also enjoyed the special veneration of English kings, for the crusading Richard I brought back this essentially soldierly cult from Palestine, Edward I displayed the red cross upon his banner, and Edward III gave pride of place to St George when founding the new knightly Order of the Garter, located within the royal Castle of Windsor. Henry VIII introduced the image of St George and the dragon on to the new noble and half-noble coins, thereby endowing the national saint with further royal sanction.[5] As may be expected, some English monarchs, such as Henry VII, Elizabeth I and Charles I, had welcomed the opportunity of claiming descent from King Arthur, and Edward III even toyed with the idea of reviving Arthur's Round Table, but until Victorian times Arthur normally remained a very shadowy figure in royal circles.

In the arts of painting and sculpture, the image of St George defeating the dragon, which had become one of the great motives in European visual culture during the later Middle Ages, survived well beyond the Renaissance. Although England clearly lagged behind Italy, Germany and Greece in the quality and quantity of images produced, there is considerable evidence of George's popularity in Pre-Reformation England as a subject for statues, mural paintings, rood screens and misericords; while, on the courtly level in Post-Reformation England, Charles I commissioned Rubens to paint him in the role of St George, and this practice was followed in Hanoverian times when a statue of George I in the guise of the saint was erected above St George's, Bloomsbury. In comparison with this plethora of Georgian imagery, the representation of Arthur remains very scarce.

Sanctioned thus by Church and Crown, George's influence was pervasive in national life. Soldiers named him in their battle cry, and important, specialist craft communities such as the armourers regarded him as their patron. Many English towns, too, placed themselves under his patronage, as did certain leading benevolent guilds. In Chester, Coventry, Leicester, Norwich, Stratford and York spectacular annual pageants took place, featuring their patron saint and his dragon foe. Out in the countryside, the traditional mumming plays, recorded everywhere except in the Celtic and East Anglian fringes of the kingdom,[6] incorporated the figures of St George and his warrior

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[5] Henry William Henfrey, *A Guide to the Study of English Coins*, rev. edn by C. F. Keary (London: George Bell, 1885), p. 41.

[6] E. C. Cawte and others, *English Ritual Drama: A Geographical Index* (London: Folk-Lore Society, 1967).

adversaries, the Turkish and Saracen Knights, within an ambience of seasonal death and resurrection. For further evidence of his popularity, one may also cite the regularity with which his name crops up on the signs of public houses, there being sixty-three in London alone in 1700.[7] In comparison, Arthur's civic fame was slight and he was never institutionalised as was St George.

Where, however, Arthur proves far stronger is that his legend had local habitations and names. Although there was an attempt to claim Coventry as George's birthplace, and a few other spots like Uffington in Berkshire were cited as the venue for his fight with the dragon, these claims never really caught on, whereas the Arthurian associations in Cornwall, Somerset, Wales, northern England and southern Scotland were very firmly embedded. Landscape features there bore the hero's name, legends flourished, and scholarly antiquarians took pride in recording the fruits of their research into such matters.

Which brings us to the one field in which Arthur was undoubtedly supreme: his role in literature. From the pseudo-histories of Geoffrey of Monmouth and his many imitators, the Arthurian subject developed into the vast array of European metrical and prose romances that formed the Matter of Britain; it was for the Middle Ages the national story of Britain, and its materials were shaped by a series of major writers: Chrétien de Troyes, Gottfried von Strassburg, Wolfram von Eschenbach, Thomas Malory, and the anonymous author of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Even in post-medieval England, the story was kept alive by Spenser, and revived for the eighteenth century theatrical repertoire by Dryden (1691) and by Fielding's burlesque version of Tom Thumb, *The Tragedy of Tragedies* (1730). Besides, there were a few minor poets (Blackmore, Hilton) writing ambitiously on the theme.

As for George, although his life was the subject of numerous *Acta* in Greek and Coptic, and a similar account in Anglo-Saxon by Aelfric (c.1030), these tales of his martyrdom never seem to have found lasting favour in England. What has caused him to be remembered here is his rescue of a princess from an evil dragon. The story was made very widely available by a Dominican bishop of Genoa, Jacobus de Voragine, who included it in his best-seller, *The Golden Legend* (c.1260). This was given even wider currency by Caxton's printing of an English translation in 1483. In the same vein, Alexander Barclay (1475?–1552) then composed a long poem on the life of St George (largely derived from Baptista Spagnuoli's work). Thereafter, as previously indicated, Spenser introduced a major rehandling of the

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[7] E. O. Gordon, *Saint George: Champion of Christendom and Patron Saint of England*, (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1907), p. 133

material by making George a chivalrous *English* knight. Richard Johnson (1573–1659?) then reshaped the story equally radically for his immensely influential *Famous History of the Seven Champions of Christendom* (1596). Johnson begins, too, by asserting that George is English, a native of Coventry, who becomes England's representative champion. He is involved in a series of wild adventures, probably taken over from the medieval tale *Bevis of Hampton*, in which George triumphs over giants and infidels, the latter being treated with an amazing ferocity. Finally, he marries Sabra, the rescued Egyptian princess, and returns with her to his home-town. Unable to retire in peace, he is asked to tackle a troublesome dragon on Dunsmore Heath; where George is victorious but mortally wounded. So popular was the book that a second part was issued, which recounted the comparable exploits of the descendants of the original seven champions. It was then turned into a blank verse drama by John Kirke.[8] The success of this form of the story prompted Thomas Lowick, at the age of eighty-two, to write his verse *History of the Life and Martyrdom of St George* (1664) in an attempt to set the record straighter by returning largely to the original *Acta* sources. In keeping with his times, Lowick shows great interest in theological controversy, and the poem's dedication to Charles II points to the heroic endurance of adversity displayed by both saint and monarch. Lowick's work, though pedestrian, is still readable but has enjoyed little renown. By contrast, despite the turgidity of Kirke's play, it gave rise to three very important developments: it provided the basis for frequent adaptations of the story that were enacted on the popular stage during the eighteenth century; and, alongside these, it led to the retelling of the story in simplified form in the chapbooks that were staple reading matter for eighteenth century children. This was the story told to the young Samuel Johnson by his mother's maid,[9] and the book that was bought by Uncle Toby.[10] Thirdly, it formed the basis of two ballads, 'The Birth of St George' and 'The Legend of St George', that found their way into Percy's collection. George's legend, then, though rarely the source of major literature, was quite widely disseminated at a popular level during the eighteenth century.

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[8] John Kirke, *The Seven Champions of Christendom* (London, 1638).

[9] James L. Clifford, *Young Samuel Johnson* (London: Heinemann, 1955), p. 22.

10 Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, ed. by Ian Campbell Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), p. 376.

2. 1765–1900

The denigration of the relics and the reputations of both Arthur and George at the hands of Protestant iconoclasts during the Reformation was to be continued by later rationalists, sceptical of previous extravagant claims. While Arthur was thus to be downgraded to the status of a minor warrior chieftain, George would be accused by Edward Gibbon (1776) of being a bacon contractor, justifiably lynched for corruption by an angry mob of citizens.[11] Although previous and later historians have pointed out this confusion between the 'real' St George and the venal George of Alexandria,[12] the saint's reputation has continued to suffer from the slur, which was, for example, repeated by the visiting Ralph Waldo Emerson in his 1856 account of contemporary English culture.[13] Nevertheless, despite losing some of the scholarly high ground of historical authenticity, George continued to flourish in dominant institutional respects. His royal connections were enhanced by the late eighteenth century restyling of Windsor Castle, with the commissioning of Matthew Wyatt's *St George* series and the inclusion of Benjamin West's painting of *Saint George and the Dragon* in the King's Audience Chamber. Richard Cosway would also execute a flatteringly allegorical painting of the Prince of Wales as St George (RA 1783), a 'very unlike' depiction according to Horace Walpole.[14] Such allegorical reference was by no means uncommon, and in the following year the Prince introduced a St George 'with a superb gloria' among the alterations to Carlton House,[15] while in a print of 1805 (BMC 10424) James Gillray represented George III as the equestrian saint about to slay a Napoleonic dragon that had attempted to ravish the maiden Britannia. Attuned to such chivalric tendencies, the Prince Regent then established in 1818 a new order of knighthood under the auspices of St George (an order which has lasted until the present), and the same period saw the adoption of a new St George and Dragon design by

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[11] Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. by Oliphant Smeaton, 6 vols (London: Dent, 1910), II, 397–99.

[12] See Peter Heylin, *The Historie of that most famous Saint and Soldier of Christ Jesus, St George of Cappodocia* (London, 1631); and John Milner, *An Historical and Critical Enquiry into the Existence and Character of St George of England* (London: Debrett, 1792).

[13] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *English Traits*, ed. by Howard Mumford Jones (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1966), p. 98.

[14] Algernon Graves, *The Royal Academy of Arts*, 8 vols (London: Henry Graves, 1905/6), II, 173.

[15] William Makepeace Thackeray, *The Four Georges* (London: Smith, Elder, 1889), p. 115.

Benedetto Pistrucci for certain English coins, a neo-classical image which was revived in 1871, and is still to be found on gold sovereigns minted for collectors. During Victoria's reign, St George's role as a symbol of national prowess was recognised by his appearance in the cartoons by George Frederic Watts and Richard Dadd for the new Houses of Parliament in the 1840s. (Watts's were approved and executed, although have since perished.) On the outside of the building, a statue of the saint by John C. Thomas was placed above the Royal Entrance Arch to the House of Lords,[16] and the same sculptor was responsible for a larger than life design of St George that formed the centre of the showpiece majolica fountain at the International Exhibition of 1862.[17]

The same exhibition also featured an item which remained unsold but indicated a significant new treatment of the legend: a cabinet made by Philip Webb, decorated by William Morris, and presenting the conventional narrative of, say, Percy's ballad but making the key figure on the cabinet the princess rather than St George.[18] This new, tender, more intimate and domestic approach echoes that of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's watercolour *The Wedding of St George and the Princess Sabra* (1857), and is related to two other important Pre-Raphaelite handlings of the legend: Rossetti's designs for Morris's stained glass series (1861/2) and Edward Burne-Jones's series for Myles Birket Foster's house (1865/7). Such figures of the dragon in art, both in contemporary work and from earlier Italian painting and sculpture, were then taken up obsessively by John Ruskin, who would launch himself into a new St George-like quest by founding a Guild of St George that aimed to promote his vision of an ideal society. For Ruskin, the St George legend supplies key images for his own fight against a dragon that is both internal and external: an inward struggle against man's sensual nature, and a social struggle against the monster of unchecked industrialisation.[19] By broadening the use of his imagery beyond that of a narrow nationalism, Ruskin is probably highly influential in giving the St George and dragon legend a wide applicability during the later nineteenth century in terms of a clear cut

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[16] Maurice Bond, ed., *Works of Art in the House of Lords* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1980), p. 37.

[17] *Masterpieces of Industrial Art and Sculpture at the International Exhibition 1862*, ed. by J. B. Waring, 3 vols (London, 1863), III, 300.

[18] *William Morris*, ed. by Linda Perry (London: Philip Wilson, 1996), pp. 172–73.

[19] See Paul Sawyer, 'Ruskin and St George: The Dragon-killing Myth in "Fors Clavigera"', *Victorian Studies*, 23 (Autumn 1979), 5–28; and Marc Simpson, 'The Dream of the Dragon: Ruskin's Serpent Imagery', in *The Ruskin Polygon: Essays in the Imagination of John Ruskin*, ed. by John Dixon Hunt and Faith M. Holland (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1982), 21–43.

battle against various forms of social ill. In this context, we find the image employed, for example, in campaigns for civic health or against the assumed 'demon' of alcoholic drink.

This secular evangelicalism was, however, to combine with the increasingly assertive male, patriotic and imperial tone of the 1890s to lend the St George image a fresh dynamism, and paintings of him in these roles as exemplar of physical prowess and/or ascetic spirituality appear frequently until the early 1900s.

As for Arthurian painting, this got off to a much slower start than that of St George in the late eighteenth century, and it was not until the employment of William Dyce in providing murals for the refurbished House of Lords that King Arthur was given royal sanction. Up to this point, Arthur's visual prominence depended largely on literary publications, for Arthurian books, both old and new, were often illustrated. After 1850, his great artistic popularity derived almost wholly from the inspiration of Tennyson (mainly) and Malory (occasionally), and unlike St George he remained little used as a national symbol.

In the performing arts, George continued to endure. In rural areas, villagers still performed the mumming plays. During William Morris's Essex childhood in the early 1840s, the Masque of St George was 'always then presented with considerable elaboration',[20] while at Tennyson's home on the Isle of Wight in the 1850s the mummers still arrived on December evenings to act *St George and the Dragon*.[21] We get a glimpse of such actors in the background of a contemporary vision of the idealised Christmas Past in Daniel Maclise's painting *Merry Christmas in the Baron's Hall* (1836). Perhaps more authentically, because drawn from his own Wessex folklore heritage, Thomas Hardy describes a performance of a comparable play in his novel *The Return of the Native* (1878),[22] and he later wrote a recension of the original play so that the Hardy Players could perform it entire when producing their dramatised version of the novel in 1920.[23] Meanwhile, on the London stages there was a steady flow of popular versions of the story, all loosely based on *The Seven Champions*. In my reckoning, at least thirty of these productions were mounted during the century. Normally, they occurred at Christmas or Easter; in

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[20] J. W. Mackail, *The Life of William Morris*, 2 vols in 1 (London: Longmans, Green, 1922), I, 10.

[21] Charles Tennyson, *Alfred Tennyson* (London: Macmillan, 1968), p. 290.

[22] Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native* (London: Macmillan, 1948), pp. 144, 157–59.

[23] 'The Play of "Saint George"', in *The Complete Poetical Works of Thomas Hardy*, ed. by Samuel Hines, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), V, 333–41.

other words they were burlesques or pantomimes, devised to please an audience in holiday mood. Typically, they were humorously updated in language and allusion: they were genial and warmly patriotic. Some idea of their style may be obtained from Gilbert A' Beckett and Mark Lemon's *St George and the Dragon* at the Adelphi Theatre, London, in 1845. This burlesque of a chivalric tale comically asserts its modernity by representing the Dragon as a blend of usurious money lender, croupier and seller of physicians' licences, who is defeated by the Press [!], which public-spiritedly exposes his hypocrisy. Miss Woolgar performed the role of St George in an atmosphere heavy with punning:

> [Cuimoth is dressing the hair of Kabyla, the enchantress]
> Cui: Your hair, my lady, 's getting rather dry,
> Some of the *Russian* balsam shall I try?
> Kab: Well, perhaps you may – yet no – upon the whole,
> Anything Russian's hurtful to the *Pole*;
> The very thought my nervous system shocks,
> O! Would that mine were like Chubb's – safety locks!
> Should I turn Grey, I'd bid the world goodbye.
> Cui: If you turn grey, it *would* be time to *dye*.

Unsurprisingly, it was, according to the *Illustrated London News*, 'entirely successful'.[24]

Similar plays featuring Arthur and/or Merlin were also staged but, by no means, as frequently. On the other hand, in more ambitious forms of poetry the figure of St George was notably scarce. When one considers the fact that the Arthurian legends are so important in the work of Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Swinburne, Morris, and a mass of minor writers, there is a remarkable dearth of Georgian incident. Browning makes a few allusions (mainly a clutch in *The Ring and the Book*), Tennyson one (in his late play *The Foresters*) but elsewhere *no reference whatsoever* is made to St George in the poetry of Keats, Shelley, Arnold, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, the Rossettis, Hopkins and Clough, or in hardly any minor poet of the period. Before discussing why this is so, I should like to turn attention first to the scant evidence that exists of poems about St George. Apart from some very incidental allusions in Swinburne, John Thelwall, Richard Hengist Horne, J. M. Neale, and a few other stray instances elsewhere, I can trace only nine poems on this theme which have survived in book form. None of these is intrinsically very valuable: one was left unfinished and unpublished in the author's lifetime, a second was childhood verse never intended

[24] 29 March 1845, p. 204. Quotations from A' Beckett and Lemon's play are taken from this review.

for formal publication, three others were published only after very long delays; they are all comparatively unknown. All the more do they now deserve our attention.

Two of the earlier ones are centred on a commonly voiced concern in the post-feudal age: the perceived decline of chivalry. In his *Tristia* (1806) collection, Peter Pindar (the pseudonym of the prolific verse satirist John Wolcot, 1738–1819) imagines a midnight meeting in St George's Chapel, Windsor, between the ghosts of the saint and King Edward III.[25] The latter expresses his anger that knighthood is no longer bestowed where it should be – on honourable and meritorious soldiers:

> Alas! The men who now the honours gain,
> Provoke from sober justice e'en a laugh;
> Lo! By those heroes, sheep are only slain,
> Geese, turkeys, rabbits, or a hog, or calf. (ll. 11–16)

The quest for glory has been replaced by the lure of 'grovelling gain' as the outward forms of knighthood are extended to farmers and tradesmen. To all of this, George acts the role of dismayed listener, and promises to give the sad story of his own Garter Knights at the next meeting between the shades.

This satire on contemporary knighthood is well complemented by Thomas Love Peacock's 'A New Order of Chivalry', which is included in his last novel, *Gryll Grange* (1861).[26] In this context it is a song sung by the reverend Doctor Opimian, a man of four pronounced tastes: a good library, a good dinner, a pleasant garden, and rural walks. A good dinner was given spice by lively and learned conversation, often interspersed with songs. On one occasion, he has been reading Hues de Tabaret's twelfth century poem *L'Ordene de Chevalerie*, which prompts him to contrast the absurd form of modern chivalry that employs a specifically Christian symbolism in the ceremony bestowing knighthood on Jews, pagans and moneylenders.

> Sir Moses, Sir Aaron, Sir Jamramajee,
> Two stock-jobbing Jews, and a shroffing Parsee,
> Have girt on the armour of old Chivalrie,
> And, instead of the Red Cross, have hoisted Balls Three.

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[25] 'Elegy. The Poet sympathises with the disgraced State of Knighthood at Windsor; and gives the Conversation that took place in St George's Chapel at Midnight between a Pair of noble Spectres', in *The Works of Peter Pindar*, 4 vols (London: Walker and Edwards, 1816), III, 323–24.

[26] Thomas Love Peacock, *Gryll Grange* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1949), pp. 124–26.

Now fancy our Sovereign, so gracious and bland,
With the sword of Saint George in her royal right hand,
Instructing this trio of marvellous Knights
In the mystical meaning of Chivalry's rites. (ll. 1–8)

Opimian scornfully questions the readiness of modern financial speculators to gainsay the appeal of market forces, and to respond patriotically and altruistically when 'Saint George and the Right' is the rallying cry':

'We have small taste for championing maids in distress;
For State we care little: for Church we care less:
To Premium and Bonus our homage we plight:
'Percentage!' we cry: and 'A fig for the right!'

'Twixt Saint George and the Dragon we settle it thus:
Which has scrip above par, is the Hero for us:
For a turn in the market, the Dragon's red gorge
Shall have our free welcome to swallow Saint George.'

Now, God save our Queen, and if aught should occur
To peril the crown or the safety of her,
God send that the leader, who faces the foe,
May have more of King Richard than Moses and Co. (ll. 49–60)

In his preamble, Opimian claims to have composed these verses 'some time since', and indeed the crudeness and lacerating tone of the attack suggests a much earlier date than 1861. As the first Jew to be knighted was Moses Montefiore in 1837, and the first to be made a baronet was Isaac Goldsmid in 1841, the poem was perhaps written at the time these events occurred, when aristocratic chivalry felt acutely threatened by the rise of the business classes; twenty years later the contest had clearly been lost.[27]

If both Pindar and Peacock are primarily interested in using the notion of St George as a convenient stalking horse to provide cover for the expression of their political views, a poem by John Herman Merivale (1779–1844) gives the traditional story a much more detailed attention. Merivale was a lawyer who made translations from Ancient Greek, and wrote an ottava rima romance, *Orlando in Roncesvalles*, all of which received his friend Byron's praise. Although not published until 1836, Merivale had completed his 'St George and the Dragon' and 'St Denis and the Mulberry Tree' between 1798 and 1801. As

[27] See Sidney Saloman, *The Jews of Britain*, 2nd edn (London: Jarrolds, 1938).

Merivale's preface discloses,[28] his composition was prompted by a reading of a translation from Wieland, which revived in him 'the delight, amounting to rapture, which attended his first introduction, almost in infancy', to Richard Johnson's *History of the Seven Champions of Christendom*. Merivale takes over from Johnson the essential narrative structure of an English knight's journey into the Egyptian desert, a meeting with an informative hermit, and the rescue of Princess Sabra from the dragon that has afflicted the land for fifty years. Stylistically, Merivale's descriptions are heavily indebted to Johnson's love of classical allusion (Maia, Philomel, Phoebus, Pygmalion...), but a strong secondary influence is clearly exerted by *The Faerie Queene* for Merivale adopts the Spenserian stanza form and, occasionally, his predecessor's characteristically archaic diction. Besides, there is a Spenserian delight in the close physical description of the fight with the dragon; and in moral tone Merivale is much closer to Spenser than to Johnson, as this is a didactic retelling that emphasises the individual's role and the moral importance of hope:

> 'Twas smiling hope that led that errant knight
> Thro' Egypt's perilous wilds and burning sands,
> To seek the meed of fame in distant lands,
> Honour's best solace, and supreme delight.
> 'Twas hope advanced him thro' the rugged road,
> By many a trial won, to fame's abode.
> 'Twas heavenly hope exalted o'er the throng,
> To shine on high, the blessed souls among,
> Saint George – of Britain's weal the tutelary God. (ll. 46–54)

Moreover, George's difficult victory over the dragon is due to heavenly rather than human agency. For when the dragon kills George's horse, and its rider faints, the beast's venomous flames strike the red cross on the hero's vest and are transmuted:

> Deadly no more,
> The life-restoring poison fill'd his breast.
> O miracle of Grace! (ll. 174–76)

George recovers and slays the dragon. But then Merivale, unexpectedly, shows no interest in the traditional evangelising role of the saint. There is no attempt to win Sabra, her parents and countrymen to the Christian flock; instead, the narrative unfolds as a love story, with

[28] John Herman Merivale, *Poems Original and Translated*, 2 vols (London: Pickering, 1838), I, 35–44.

Merivale lingering over the physical charms, and awakening love, of the rescued virgin:

> But if the maid such various passions move,
> On the blest victor's heart what rapture steals,
> As every moment some new charm reveals,
> And her eyes sparkle with the flames of love?
> Lingering and silent they together trace
> Their path towards the Hermit's holy place:
> Expressive silence! – words had less display'd
> The awaken'd fervours of that grateful maid
> Than did her speaking eyes and love-illumined face. (ll. 199–207)

Merivale concludes his tale shortly after this, so we remain uncertain whether the lovers would marry immediately or, as in Richard Johnson's account, some years later; but as 'long hours of solace' are promised them by an 'indulgent Heaven' there can be little doubt that Merivale wished to suggest an eventual marriage.

The very different approaches of Merivale and Peacock/Pindar are, however, fused in what may stand as the keynote St George poem of the early nineteenth century: Robert Southey's 'Ode for St George's Day' (1820), which makes a broadly inclusive survey of the whole topic by uniting politics with romance.[29] On one hand, Southey draws on his delighted and voluminous reading of romance literature; on the other, as Poet Laureate he is admirably placed to deliver a patriotic ode in honour of the new King. Adopting a chronological framework, Southey summarises with a Gibbonian irony the 'wild tales' of St George's 'doubtful name' told by 'fabling monks' in 'dark days'. Unusually among nineteenth century writers, Southey supplies details of his hero's miraculous resistance to torture, before passing to the more commonly recounted story of dragon slaying. Such 'monastic fables' are then, in Southey's view, taken up by later minstrels to produce the more finely textured romances concerned with love and enchantment. The next stage is George's transformation into a soldier-saint whose martial renown is successfully invoked by Christian knights of Aragon and Malta against their Moorish and Ottoman foes. By an easy transition, Southey then names England as bestowing the 'proudest praise' and 'loftiest fame' upon George, a shift of focus which enables the poem to express some conventionally anti-Gallican sentiments. Finally, Southey proclaims that English kings have exceptionally honoured the saint by bearing his name. With some justification, Southey can point to the peaceful prosperity of

[29] *The Poetical Works of Robert Southey*, 10 vols (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1837/8), III, 258–62.

England's Georgian (i.e. Hanoverian) era as her 'happiest age'. Fittingly, the bells now ring out to honour the newly acceded King George IV:

> Ring, then, ye bells upon St George's Day,
> From every tower in glad accordance ring;
> And let all instruments full, strong, or sweet,
> With touch of modulated string,
> And soft or swelling breath, and sonorous beat,
> The happy name repeat,
> While heart and voice their joyous tribute bring
> And speak the People's love for George their King. (ll. 128–35)

Despite being apparently commissioned for the royal birthday, and set to music by William Shield, Southey's ode was not given its expected public performance, and has received very little subsequent attention. Although included in Southey's own collection of 1837/8, it was omitted from the later Oxford edition; Byron's celebrated attack on Southey for being a monarchical toady probably contributing largely, albeit unfairly, to the poem's displacement.

If Southey's was a public venture that missed its mark, the final 'Georgian' poem of the era was, in contrast, never intended for a wide audience, since John Ruskin's first engagement with the material was a twenty-line poem 'George of England' which he wrote in 1829 to be read by his family.[30] The boy-poet, whose purpose was unclouded by the distractions of morality and amorous affection but fascinated by his hero's gold armour and purple plume, revels in the routing of his enemies, and re-enacts much of the sanguinary spirit of *The Seven Champions*:

> My purple plume was stained with gore
> Of all the foes I hate
> Those whom I dislike are no more
> And bloody is their fate. (ll. 9–12)

For this verse, Ruskin supplies a head- and tail-piece. While the former shows a conventional knight in plate armour with raised spear, the latter is closely modelled on the Pistrucci design that was currently on the British coinage. It is interesting, though, that the youthful Ruskin had drawn the equestrian figure armed medievally cap-a-pe, for this was a topic that was later to bother him considerably in *Fors*

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[30] Jeffrey L. Spear, *Dreams of an English Eden: Ruskin and His Tradition in Social Criticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), pp. 130–31.

Clavigera (February 1873).[31] Complaining there that modern art was unsatisfactory in its picturing of St George, he cited the Pistrucci coin as a good example of die-cutting ('one of the best bits of work we have on our money'), but thought it was ridiculously 'comic' as a design because the rider's feet were dangerously exposed to the bite of the dragon. Even though George's neo-Roman garb is certainly more historically authentic than plate armour would have been, Ruskin argues in *Modern Painters* that a painting should appear 'probable' to its gazer, and in this situation 'probability' meant taking care of one's toes. He was to air a comparable scorn about the lack of probable circumstances in Claude's *St George and the Dragon*:

> The dragon is about the size of ten bramble leaves, and is being killed by the remains of a lance, barely the thickness of a walking stick, in his throat, curling his tail in a highly offensive and threatening manner. St George, notwithstanding, on a prancing horse, brandishes his sword, at about thirty yards' distance from the offensive animal.[32]

Although Ruskin contends in his *Fors* letter that modern art has failed to picture St George effectively, he neglects to mention modern work of which he elsewhere approves. In, for example, his 1883 lecture on 'Mythic Schools of Painting' he commends Watts's murals for the Houses of Parliament (which had included scenes from the life of St George), and he displays for students' admiration some photographs of Burne-Jones's work, including 'the story of St George and Sabra'.[33] In fact, Burne-Jones had delighted in copying Vittore Carpaccio's *St George* at the Venetian Church of San Giorgio Maggiore ten years before Ruskin himself copied the variant painting in the Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni. The Pre-Raphaelites' interest in St George, which has been mentioned above, very likely provided an important stimulus for the development of Ruskin's own concern; their emphasis, however, remained distinct from his.

This may be seen from the unfinished poem, of seven quatrains, that William Morris began, probably in the early 1860s, the period when he was decorating Webb's cabinet.[34] For this latter, extraordinarily, Morris did not paint George's fight with the dragon, but depicted five other scenes: the sorrowful king; the princess led out by armed men; the princess tied to a tree; George raising the princess

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[31] *The Works of John Ruskin*, Library Edition, ed. by E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: Allen, 1903/12), XXVII, 474–75.

[32] *Works*, VII, 321.

[33] *Works*, XXXIII, 303.

[34] 'Saint George', in *The Collected Works of William Morris*, ed. by May Morris, 24 vols (New York: Russell and Russell, 1966), XXIV, 75.

to her feet, with a small slain dragon behind him; and the return of the couple to the city, the princess remaining closer to our gaze. Despite being called 'Saint George', Morris's poem does not mention him, and the poem seems very close in detail and mood to the second of his painted scenes. Indeed, it is a very visual account in terms of colour, costume and physical gesture:

> Her head down to the ground a little drooped,
> Her loose hair combed out thin on either side,
> Beneath a scarlet mantle furred she stooped,
> A thin white kirtle clad her like a bride. (ll. 21–24)

Moreover, this is, like the painting, based on the princess's plight: the narrator tells the story from her viewpoint, and focuses on the day when she is led out to await the dragon. We sense that her environment is intensely hostile:

> There were no women with her; but tall men
> This side and that plodded with heavy tread:
> Armed close and clean with steel they were, as when
> In bitter fight the guisarme skins the head (ll. 25–28)

Sabra is represented as Christian, yet religion seems to deliver no comfort for her at this point:

> But now she thought it hard to think of God;
> Although her lips kept muttering as she went,
> 'God help! Christ help!' (ll. 9–11)

Like Arthur's queen in an earlier Morris poem, 'The Defence of Guenevere' (1858), the princess is represented as a very isolated and endangered figure. It is possible that the painted scenes conveyed an intensely personal message for Morris: that the rescue of the princess symbolised his rescue of Jane Burden by marriage from a dark world of privation, and it may be that the completed poem would have developed along similar lines. But, in its fragmentary state, such an achieved closure is denied: what remains is anguish foregrounded.

In a comparable, though slighter, mode is 'Emancipation' (1869) by Edward Robert Bulwer Lytton (1831–1891), which again is concentrated upon a crucial moment in a girl's life.[35] Based on a translation from a Servian (or Serbian) ballad, this short poem takes

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[35] Edward Robert Bulwer Lytton, *Orval, or The Fool of Time; and other Imitations and Translations* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1869), p. 409.

the form of the girl's earnest and sorrowful prayer on St George's Day. She breathes a vow:

> O Day of St George, when again to us
> Thou returnest, and they carouse
> Here in my mother's house,
> May'st thou find me either a corpse or a bride,
> Either buried or wed;
> But however that may betide,
> And whether a corpse or a spouse,
> No more in my mother's house. (ll. 2–9)

A powerful irony is at work here as this martyr's feast day has no connotations of gentle chivalry, but suggests an occasion of male brutality and a severed familial relation; hence the framing and compression of the action within the yearly limits marked by the festival tersely create a sense of intense and imminent violence.

Twenty-five years were to elapse before other St George poems were published. In the 1890s, however, there were two considerable works, and whereas the earliest poems in the century looked back regretfully to a lost chivalric age, these later ones are confident that a new imperial age of chivalry is in the immediate offing. The first was by John Davidson (1857–1909) and appeared in his *Fleet Street Eclogues* (1893/6), a series of poems linked with days of national importance, and ostensibly projecting the various opinions of a group of London journalists. One of these begins the sequence ('New Year's Day') with a diatribe against those modern dragons, the newspapers:[36]

> These dragons that hide the sun!
> Those serpents flying and fiery,
> That knotted a nation in one
> Writhen mass: the scaley and wirey,
> And flame breathing terror the saint
> Still slays on our coins; the thing
> That wandering artists paint
> Where creaking sign-boards swing (ll. 45–52)

Davidson, though, never speaks *in propria persona* but allows widely differing viewpoints to be aired before the group of journalists gradually establishes some form of consensus. This method gives sharply dramatic effect to a poem published in the Second Series: 'St

[36] *The Poems of John Davidson*, ed. by Andrew Turnbull, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1973), I.

George's Day'. In this, the opening speaker, Herbert, lyrically celebrates the beauty of the English countryside in spring:

> I hear the lark and linnet sing;
> I hear the whitethroat's alto ring. (ll. 1–2)

But this appreciation of natural beauty is met by the lugubrious response of Menzies' impressively detailed critique of social conditions in the Victorian city:

> I cannot see the stars and flowers,
> Nor hear the lark's soprano ring,
> Because a ruddy darkness lowers
> For ever, and the tempests sing.
> I see the strong coerce the weak,
> And labour overwrought rebel;
> I hear the useless treadmill creak,
> The prisoner, cursing in his cell;
> I see the loafer-burnished wall;
> I hear the rotting match-girl whine;
> I see the unslept switchman fall;
> I hear the explosion in the mine;
> I see along the heedless street
> The sandwichmen trudge through the mire;
> I hear the tired quick tripping feet
> Of sad, gay girls who ply for hire. (ll. 35–50)

In Gibbonian style, Menzies constantly accuses St George of being a 'wretched thief', but his views are persistently opposed by his colleagues, who argue that as English culture has successfully united the originally separate races of Britain ('thought and speech are more than blood'), and has conquered America likewise ('For Yankee blood is English blood'), it is now England's role to found a just, progressive and perpetual world-wide empire. Menzies is induced to fall in with this theory, finally accepting the proposition that 'we are the world's forlorn hope'; so presumably he believes England's civilising mission is the best hope the world can offer. This convergence of opinion then allows the poem to close on a note of harmonious paean to the English spring, to Englishmen, and to a Greater England, of which St George remains the symbol.

These lofty aspirations were taken up and considerably amplified by *The Banner of St George*, a 'ballad for chorus and orchestra' by Shapcott Wensley and Edward Elgar which was commissioned by the music publisher Novello for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Wensley's libretto is verbally unadventurous for it was

not intended to stand on its own; nevertheless, it remains the fullest nineteenth century handling of the St George legend. In the first two scenes, Wensley presents the traditional story, as transmitted by Percy's ballad, of George and Sabra. Of course, Wensley's relatively colourless account is immeasurably enhanced by the texture of Elgar's musical setting, which conveys a delicate pathos, noble aspiration and dramatic conflict.[37] The music is particularly effective and moving at the climactic moment when, after the defeat of the dragon, St George renounces the option of a happy marriage and the share of a kingdom:

> He mounts his steed: 'Farewell, O gentle maid;
> Ye people of Sylene, fare you well;
> For I must bear the cross in other lands,
> And strive and suffer, till the morn shall dawn
> That brings for me the martyr's fadeless crown!' (ll. 115–19)

Unlike Spenser's or Richard Johnson's proselytising champion, this hero has a mission which is framed in chivalric terms that are broadly humanitarian rather than narrowly doctrinal:

> Where the strong the weak oppress,
> Where the suffering succour crave,
> Where the tyrant spreads distress,
> There the cross of George must wave. (ll. 120–23)

Wensley then proceeds to an Epilogue, set as a noble march by Elgar, which hymns the St George's flag because it serves as a reminder of past deeds of England's glory (defeat of the Spanish Armada, for instance); but the hope is expressed that the flag will never be unfurled in an unrighteous war ('Be brave if your cause be right'), and the whole choral work concludes with a prayer for the long continuance of the British Empire.

Although the nine poems considered have spanned the entire period, they amount to only a very small total haul; clearly the St George legend did not form a major part of the general vocabulary of nineteenth century poets, even though it certainly did so for contemporary painting and popular drama. Sometimes it seems mere chance was responsible for this situation, for it would have been quite within the bounds of expectation if Morris had extended and concluded his fragment, or if Dante Gabriel Rossetti had written a sonnet to accompany one of his George pictures, or if Charles Kingsley had lighted on this rather than the analogous Andromeda legend for his

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[37] Edward Elgar, *The Banner of St George*. With text by Shapcott Wensley. EMI Records, CDM 5 65108 (1984).

rescued-princess poem, or if Tennyson had turned to one of the Percy ballads on the George theme, as he did for his Cophetua poem; and it is quite possible that some minor sentimental and patriotic verses on this topic still lurk unread in the forgotten pages of former periodicals. Indeed, one might compose in this way a notional catalogue of unwritten Victorian poems. Alternatively, a number of explanatory hypotheses may be framed. It may be the case, for instance, that the story is essentially visual rather than literary; or akin to a rite that is close to overt dramatic performance rather than the interiority of printed literature. Or it may be that there is a generic conservatism that tends to confine certain subjects to certain media, and that Victorian poets felt that the material was, through its long association with pantomime and burlesque, too low-brow and hackneyed for them to take up; the Robin Hood legend seems to have suffered a similar ostracism. Again, perhaps the basic story was thought so slender that it offered little scope for a new treatment. Perhaps literature, too, continually feeds off its own past: hence, while nineteenth century Arthurian writing could discover new sources in the constantly rediscovered medieval texts, there were too few early Georgian texts with sufficient prestige for writers to turn to. I suspect, besides, that the subject may have been too overtly Christian for most major Victorian poets, who were finding it difficult to confine their beliefs within an orthodox theology, but it was insufficiently historical and 'authentic' for those who were profoundly Christian. In sum, by accident or design, the St George literature of the nineteenth century remains oddly peripheral when compared with that of Arthur, in which the far richer range of interpretations and emphases among its shifting personae and venues grew so strongly as to become a central Victorian myth, wherein there could be realised a profound concern with man's relation to God (the Grail), with social organisation (Camelot), and with the complexity of personal relationships between men (Arthur/Lancelot) or between men and women (Lancelot/Guenevere and Tristram/Iseult).

3. To the present

In the visual arts, St George enjoyed his apogee during the first decade of the twentieth century, and even after the end of the First World War his image was a dominant feature of memorial statues and ecclesiastical stained glass. Thereafter, his reputation in all aspects underwent a slow shrinkage in the wake of hostility towards the Christian churches, patriotism, British imperialism, the chivalric code, and romantic medievalism.

Paradoxically, though, this period of decline has witnessed the most substantial reinterpretation of the legend for three centuries in John Masefield's *A Play of St George*, which was written to celebrate the six-hundredth anniversary of the institution of the Order of the Garter.[38] Unlike Spenser and Johnson, who had located the story within a very idiosyncratic framework of a fairyland allegory or the companionship of the Seven Champions, Masefield elected to set his play firmly in late Roman times, which locates it convincingly within the historical power struggle between paganism and early Christianity. Lowick had also chosen a comparable historical approach but, whereas he had felt obliged to incorporate the later legend of the Egyptian dragon, Masefield deliberately reduces such supernatural elements by converting the legendary monster into a pirate king who is nicknamed the Sea-Dragon. After rescuing Princess Sabra from this human beast, George is confronted by the Diocletian demand to offer a profession of faith to the Roman gods. On refusing, he encounters no protracted torture, but is summarily executed. The play has a cool sobriety: George is no romantic crusader but a modern young man who bravely resists oppression, for Masefield seems to give the material a determinedly contemporary reading, allegorising the acute conflict that had newly arisen in Eastern Europe between individual conscience and state communist tyranny.

Nevertheless, despite Masefield's play and the random appearance of other poetry on the theme (such as John Heath-Stubbs's witty 'St George and the Dinosaur'),[39] this material is dwarfed by the mass of Arthurian works which have steadily appeared throughout the century on both sides of the Atlantic, and particularly since the republication of T. H. White in the 1950s. The interest in Arthur is so commonplace in historical studies, novels, plays, children's books, operas, pop songs, cartoons, films and television series that it has become the dominant national legend, and is once more the Matter of Britain. Showing itself perpetually able to adapt to fresh concerns, it is now given new directions and energies from a host of disparate sources: Avalon and Camelot have been colonised by SciFi, Morgan Le Fay and her sistren by feminists, Merlin and the Grail by New Age seekers. Tintagel and Glastonbury thrive on a new pilgrim trade, and while a recent writer has claimed that Prince Charles is virtually a modern manifestation of King Arthur,[40] we also have a well-publicised Arthur Uther Pendragon,

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[38] John Masefield, *A Play of St George* (London: Heinemann, 1948).

[39] *The Collected Poems of John Heath-Stubbs, 1943–1987* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1988), pp. 107–08.

[40] Page Bryant, *Awakening Arthur!: His Return in Our Time* (London: Aquarius/Thorsons, 1981), pp. 181–88, 190–91.

a self-proclaimed reincarnation of his namesake, who protests against proposed town by-passes, and tries to worship at Stonehenge every summer solstice.[41]

In vivid contrast, St George's domain, which is distinctively Cisatlantic, has fallen from popular and official favour. Embarrassed by his insecure historical record, the Vatican reduced his feast day internationally to a merely 'optional' festival from 1969, though in England it remained an obligatory feast of the second class. His head-on struggle against Evil is considered simplistic, and, since he is widely accused of improper behaviour in rescuing a woman, attempts are made to reshape the archetypes by issuing children's books with such titles as *Georgie and the Dragon* and *Georgina and the Dragon*.[42] These dragons are not, of course, killed because dragons have become a valued cultural icon (symbolic of China and the Celts) and a protected literary species; the essential polarity of the traditional combat between man and animal having now been replaced by a more complementary relationship between man and other dwellers on the planet.

In such an altered milieu, the Pendragon would seem to have outlived the Saint. But within the last year or so the earth has moved. This small seismic eruption was signalled by the decision of the General Synod of the Church of England in July 1996 to convert St George's Day into one of the thirty major festivals mandatory in the church, and to provide prayers and readings in St George's honour.[43] Moreover, in the revised Roman Catholic National Calendar, the day will be upgraded to the rank of a first class solemnity. That this promotion seems to answer a popular need is suggested by the sight of the football terraces of Wembley Stadium, during the finals of the European Cup, awash to an unprecedented extent with the cross of St George on flags, hats and faces. Recent commercial activity seems to have picked up the trend: the English Tourist Board has just begun actively promoting St George's Day, and one may now select from twenty different designs for St George's Day greetings cards at Clinton Cards, the 500-shop chain.[44] Nor has this mood been confined to the terraces and the shopping malls, for during one of the latest disputes between the British government and the European Union London

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[41] Nick Cohen, 'King Arthur fights holy war', *Independent on Sunday*, 11 June 1995.

[42] Julia Jarman and Damon Burnand, *Georgie and the Dragon* (London: Black, 1991); Joanna Jellinek and Agnes Molnar, *Georgina and the Dragon* (London: Warne, 1977).

[43] David Barrett, 'Dragons beware – St George is back to stay', *Eastern Daily Press*, 17 July 1996, p. 13.

[44] Catherine Elsworth, 'Now St George gets rebranding treatment', *Sunday Telegraph*, 5 April 1998, p. 3.

newspapers appeared with banner headlines such as the ironic 'For beef, Major and St George' (in the broadsheet *Independent*) and the fervid 'Beware the EU dragon' (in the tabloid *Sun*), both of which publications clearly identified the Germans with the dragon.[45] It is likely that an English nationalism will resurface in response firstly to the rise of a surging Scottish nationalism that will fracture the United Kingdom, and secondly as a reaction against a European Union that will deprive Britain (or England) of its autonomy. With these events in prospect, it is quite possible that national feeling will once more focus on St George as an appropriate icon. Like Arthur's his story looks set to run and run.

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[45] *Independent*, 28 May 1996, p. 1; *Sun*, 23 April 1996, pp. 1, 6.

'THE DEATH-SONG OF RAGNAR LODBROG': A STUDY IN SENSIBILITIES

TOM SHIPPEY

IN 1820, LOOKING BACK over the success of his *History of the Anglo-Saxons* from the 'Preface' of its third edition, Sharon Turner remarked that when the first volume of the first edition appeared (in 1799), 'the subject of the Anglo-Saxon antiquities had been nearly forgotten by the British public', and neither the language nor its texts nor the historical facts embedded in 'the ancient writers and records of other nations' were ever studied. Turner continues, 'The Quida, or death-song, of Ragnar Lodbrog first led the present author to perceive the deficiency, and excited his wish to supply it'.[1] It is a strange remark, for 'The Death-Song of Ragnar Lodbrog',[2] now more often and more temperately called the *Krákumál*, is not Anglo-Saxon at all, and even if it counts as one of the 'records of other nations', it seems an unlikely way in to Anglo-Saxon history. A modern scholar of Anglo-Saxon or Old Norse antiquities would probably add that the poem is no longer much admired, and hardly deserves the credit for what Turner saw as a radical change of attitude towards the English past. Nevertheless, fifty years after Turner, when the author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays* was groping for an image of total opposition between the spirit of Christianity and that of heathenism, he declared in his hagiographic life of *Alfred the Great* that on the eve of Ashdown there lay by one set of camp-fires 'a youth who carried in his bosom the Psalms of David', while from the opposing camp, 'We may fancy [...] the song of Regner Lodbrog beguiling the night-watches: "We fought with swords! Young men should march up to the conflict of arms. Man should meet man and never give ground [...]"' (and Hughes goes on to cite the rest of stanza 22).[3] 'The Death-Song of Ragnar' was still accepted shorthand for the Viking spirit, which

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[1] Sharon Turner, *History of the Anglo-Saxons, comprising the history of England from the earliest times to the Norman Conquest*, 3rd edn (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1820), p. v.

[2] The correct Norse form of the name is Ragnarr Loðbrók, but I have not attempted to normalise the forms used in the seventeenth century and later, and refer to the hero myself with the familiar Ragnar.

[3] Thomas Hughes, *Alfred the Great* (Osgood: Boston, 1871), p. 76.

Hughes (with due Christian reservation) in fact continued to admire.

In between Turner's reading of the poem and Hughes's reaction to it, Sir Walter Scott's unfortunate protégé Henry Weber, who had heard that the Icelander Grímur Jónsson Thorkelín was editing something from the British Museum – it would turn out to be *Beowulf* – said that he understood that it was 'A long Anglo-Saxon poem on the expedition of Regner Lodbrog [...] the publication of which would be a very desirable object'.[4] This too is a strange remark, for *Beowulf* contains no mention of Ragnar or anyone like him, and furthermore the poem had already been described once by Humfrey Wanley and twice by Sharon Turner in terms which, erroneous as they were, offered no foothold for Weber's idea.[5] One can only conclude that Weber thought *Beowulf* was about Ragnar Loðbrók because he very much hoped it would be. Ragnar was the favourite of antiquarians, and his 'Death-Song' was regarded as the acme of Old Norse, or rather Old Northern poetry.

The modern opinion is very different. Guðbrandur Vigfússon and F. York Powell set the tone in their definitive work of 1883, the *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, in which the 'Krakumal' as they call it appears, in full, in the original language – but with the first twenty-one of its twenty-nine stanzas degraded to a smaller font, and furnished with a running translation at the foot of the page which is frankly sketchy.[6] At stanza 22 the editors relent, and allow the rest of the poem to appear in letters of standard size, commenting at the foot of the page, '*Henceforward the poem is of a nobler type, and we translate more fully*'. They make it clear, however, that they prefer the poem they print next, saying that 'these verses [...] are more simple and genuine than many of those of the same metre, such as the Krakumal.' Their opinion was strongly seconded a few years later by W. P. Ker, who says that the poem has:

> the characteristic of imitative and conventional heroic literature – the unpersuasive and unconvincing force of the heroic romance, the rhetoric of Almanzor. The end of the poem is fine [Ker concedes] but it does not ring quite true [...] it is not like the end of the sons of Gudrun; it is not of the same kind as the last words of Sorli, which are simpler, and infinitely more imaginative and true.[7]

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[4] Henry Weber, *Illustrations of Northern Antiquities* (Edinburgh: Ballantyne; London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1814), footnote on p. 7.

[5] For information on and texts of these, see *The Critical Heritage: Beowulf*, ed. by T. A. Shippey and Andreas Haarder (London: Routledge, 1998), esp. pp. 1–9.

[6] *Corpus Poeticum Boreale*, ed. by Gudbrand Vigfusson and F. York Powell, 2 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1883), II, 339–45.

[7] W. P. Ker, *Epic and Romance: Essays on Medieval Literature*, 2nd edn (London:

Ker quotes the last stanza of the *Krákumál* and the last stanza of the *Hamðismál*, and leaves no doubt which he prefers. It is true, he concedes again, that the poem has been much appreciated 'by modern authors', being 'one of the documents responsible for the conventional Valkyria and Valhalla of the Romantic School'. But part of the reason for this is that the poem was 'romantic' to begin with, the work of 'an antiquarian poet with an eye for historical subjects' (p. 141) – not, then, a true bearer of the heroic spirit. In the same work Ker said, of course, not dissimilar things about *Beowulf*, which he also found disappointing. But while Ker's opinions on *Beowulf* were fiercely attacked by Tolkien and have now disappeared from scholarship, his view of the *Krákumál* has remained effectively unchallenged. The entry on the poem in the recent encyclopedia of medieval Scandinavia from Garland Press, written by Anne Heinrichs, can find no extensive modern study to cite, and says 'it definitely needs a new evaluation'.[8]

The point of this study, however, is not to offer such an evaluation, but rather to look back on the extraordinarily high evaluations of it in the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth. Why did it draw such a productive response from Sharon Turner? And where did he encounter it? The latter is a problem which only dramatises further the poem's popularity, for Turner by 1799 could have read it in any one of three total and almost a dozen partial translations into English, with two Latin ones also available to him.[9] Its early history shows how dramatically European culture was affected by the literature of a remote island, in an almost unknown language, preserved in a few manuscripts, and owned originally by farmers remote from royal, noble and even episcopal libraries. Outside scholarship, one may add, the effects have lasted to this day.[10]

Anne Heinrichs has given a clear recent account of the way in which the *Krákumál* was discovered and launched upon a European stage.[11] At the start of the 1630s it seems that officials of the Danish

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Macmillan, 1908), p. 140.

[8] Anne Heinrichs, 'Krákumál', in *Medieval Scandinavia: an Encyclopedia*, ed. by Phillip Pulsiano and others (New York and London: Garland, 1993), pp. 368–9.

[9] The English versions are excellently surveyed by Frank Edgar Farley, *Scandinavian Influences in the English Romantic Movement*, Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature 9 (Boston: Ginn, 1903), pp. 59–76; and again by Margaret Omberg, *Scandinavian Themes in English Poetry, 1760–1800*, Studia Anglistica Uppsaliensia, 29 (Stockholm: Uppsala University, 1976).

[10] See especially Régis Boyer, 'Vikings, Sagas, and Wasa Bread', in *Northern Antiquity: the Post-Medieval Reception of Edda and Saga*, ed. by Andrew Wawn (Enfield Lock: Hisarlik, 1994), pp. 69–81.

[11] Anne Heinrichs, 'Von Ole Worm zu Albert ten Kate: Frühe Rezeption der

government launched a search for documents in Iceland which would support or explain their national history, that of Saxo Grammaticus. Results were negative, till Magnús Ólafsson, a priest in Laufás in northern Iceland, came up with a manuscript which had at its end the *Skæbnekvad* or 'fate-song' of 'Regnar Lodbrog, the ancient king of Denmark'. He announced this in a letter of 1632 to the Danish scholar Ole Worm, and seems then to have sent Worm a transcript, a translation into Danish, and a commentary. On the basis of these Worm published a Latin translation of the poem, in twenty-nine stanzas, with an Old Norse text written in runes and an accompanying Latin commentary, in his *Runer* of 1636.[12] The manuscript Ólafsson used has since been lost. A second manuscript survives, as does a second transcript by Ólafsson.

Worm's work had considerable impact across Europe, with a Danish version almost immediately, and subsequent translations into Dutch, Swedish, French and German.[13] English reactions were, to begin with, not particularly respectful, foreshadowing more modern opinions. To understand this, one has to note that the *Krákumál* is by no means easy to understand. It has indeed been plagued from the start by mistranslations of a potentially comic kind.

The poem consists, as has been said, of twenty-nine stanzas. It is, as Heinrichs says in her encyclopedia entry, both a 'Death-Song' and an *ævisöngr*, a 'life-song', in which a dying hero looks back over his career. The hero in this case is Ragnar Loðbrók, i.e. Ragnar 'Hairy-Breeks', whose career had been known for centuries from Saxo Grammaticus, Book 2, and which is also told in the *Ragnars saga Loðbrókar* and the *Þáttr af Ragnars synum*, both discovered, edited and translated frequently from the early nineteenth century.[14] The poem feigns to be Ragnar's own words from the snake-pit into which he has been thrown by King Ella of Northumbria, as he dies of poison. Its structure is clear. In the first stanza – they are mostly ten lines long, rather than the eight of regular *dróttkvætt* – Ragnar explains how he

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"Krákumál"', in *Sprache in Gegenwart und Geschichte: Festschrift für Heinrich Matthias Heinrichs*, ed. by Dietrich Hartmann and others (Cologne and Vienna: Böhlau, 1978), pp. 294–306.

[12] Olaus Wormius [Ole Worm], *Runer, seu Danica Literatura Antiquissima vulgo Gothica dicta hic reddita opera* (Copenhagen: Holst, 1636), pp. 196–227. Since Worm used his runic alphabet not only for the poem but also for his title, 'Runer', there are often variations in later transcriptions.

[13] There is a partial list in Halldór Hermannsson, *Bibliography of the mythical-heroic sagas*, Islandica, 5 (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Library, 1912), pp. 36 ff.

[14] See Rory McTurk, *Studies in Ragnars Saga Loðbrókar and its Major Scandinavian Analogues*, Medium Ævum Monographs, NS 15 (Oxford: Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature, 1991).

got his name: he constructed his famous trousers to ward off the bite of the dragon guarding his bride Thora. In each of stanzas 2 to 21 inclusive he recalls some famous exploit of his life, most of them now impossible to relate to any of the stories about him. Every one of these stanzas contains at least one name, of place or person, on which Ragnar's memory is anchored; but no stanza relates to any of the others (they could be in any order), and all the stanzas consist to a remarkable degree of main clauses linked paratactically. Characteristic is stanza 6, which I give both in Old Norse (from *Corpus Poeticum*), in Latin (from Ole Worm, or Olaus Wormius), and finally in modern English (from Margaret Schlauch's translation of 1930):[15]

Hioggo ver með hiörvi:-	[Pugnavimus Ensibus]
Herr kastaði skiöldom,	Exercitus abjecit clypeos
þa-er ræ-gagarr rendi	Cum hasta volavit
ræstr at gumna brióstom;	Ardua ad virorum pectora
beit í Skarpa-skerjom	Momordit Scarforum cautes
skæri-bildr at hialdri;	Gladius in pugna
roðinn var randar-máni	Sanguineus erat Clypeus
áðr Ramn konungr félli;	Antequam Rafno rex caderet
dreif or hölða hausum	Fluxit ex virorum capitibus
heitr á brynjor sveiti.	Calidus in loricas sudor.

We hewed with the sword! Men cast down their shields
When by our arrows their breasts were rent;
Our swords bit hard by Skarpa-skerry,
And red were all shields ere Rafn fell:
On the byrnies ran sweat with hot gore blent.

After these twenty-one stanzas, nos. 22 and 23 become gnomically general, without names. From stanza 24 on Ragnar refers to his current situation, in the snake-pit, at Ella's mercy, but destined to be avenged (he says) by his sons, and to go to the halls of Odin in death. His last words in stanza 29 are 'Læjandi skal-ek deyja', in word-for-word translation 'Laughing shall I die'. All stanzas except the last begin with the words 'Hioggo ver með hiörvi', 'We hewed with the sword'.

However, though the structure is clear, the words are not. In the stanza quoted above, for instance, lines 3, 6 and 7 all contain the

[15] A more modern edition for the Old Norse text is to be found in *Den norsk-isländska skjaldedigtningen*, ed. by E. A. Kock, 2 vols (Lund: Gleerup, 1946–9), I, 316–21, but I retain the *Corpus Poeticum* text for its intrinsic interest; for more accessible texts of Worm's Latin, see note 27 below; the English translation is from *The Saga of the Volsungs [...]*, trans. by Margaret Schlauch (New York: American-Scandinavian Foundation, and London: Allen & Unwin, 1930), pp. 259–67.

characteristic metaphoric compounds, or *kenningar*, of skaldic verse: *ræ-gagarr*, 'dog of corpses' = 'tearer of corpses' = 'sword ?', *skæri-bildr*, 'shear-arrow' = 'javelin ?', *randar-máni*, 'moon of shields' = 'round shields'. Magnús Ólafsson was a native speaker of Icelandic, a language which has changed comparatively little over the centuries; but phrases like these were not part of his vocabulary, and he sometimes got them wrong. The most famous case, noted both by Vigfusson and Powell (who ascribe the 'funny mistake' to Worm, saving Ólafsson's credit) and by E. V. Gordon, who is much more severe,[16] comes in stanza 25, where Ragnar, now speaking of his immediate situation in the snake-pit, says that 'It always makes me laugh that I know the benches of Balder's father [= Odin] are ready for the feast. 'Drekkom biór at bragði / or biúg-viðom hausa' (We will drink beer swiftly out of the twisted-woods of skulls). The 'twisted-woods of skulls' is a kenning for 'horns', and drinking out of them is a normal enough thing to do; but Ólafsson concentrated on the word 'skulls', so that Worm's comment, derived from Ólafsson, reads (in Latin, Worm p. 223), 'The heroes hoped that in the hall of Odin they would drink from the skulls of those they had killed'. Worm's translation ran, in lines frequently cited, 'Bibemus cerevisiam brevi / Ex concavis crateribus craniorum' (We will drink beer soon out of the hollow bowls of skulls, Worm p. 222). The cliché of 'the ferocious death-scorning skull-draining viking' was to become, as Gordon angrily noted, 'an affliction to the reader' (p. lxx). It was not the only cliché to arise from Ólafsson's difficulties with the language, another famous one stemming from his inability to recognise the negative particle *-a(t)*. This occurs in two similar contexts in the poem, first at the end of stanza 13, which reads (after the usual account of the clash of battle), 'varat sem biarta brúði / í bing hiá ser leggja' (it was not [at all] like laying one's bright bride in bed next to you). The scornful assertion of masculinity is repeated in stanza 14 (in Ólafsson/Worm - some modern editions place the lines in stanza 20), 'vara sem unga ekkjo í öndugi kyssa' (it was not [at all] like kissing a young widow in the high-seat). Ólafsson missed the 'not' out both times, leading Worm into strange conflations of sex and violence: 'Erat sicut splendidam virginem / In lecto juxta se collocare [...]. Erat hoc veluti juvenem viduam / In primaria sede osculari'. Gordon is once again angrily sarcastic about the error; and his sarcasm has no doubt contributed to the general downrating of the poem, as the source (of course the innocent source) of clichés unwelcome to scholars. However the point, once again, is not to plead for a re-evaluation of the poem, but to

[16] See E. V. Gordon, *Introduction to Old Norse*, 2nd edn, rev. by A. R. Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon, 1957), pp. lxix–lxxii.

attempt to see it as early readers did. They were quite clearly moved and stimulated, and as Turner said, the results of that stimulation were to create more interest and more exact knowledge. But the sources of it, I would suggest, lay precisely in the poem's apparent provocations on the subjects of death and violence, sex, drink and class: the major taboo-areas of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century culture, as of our own.

The first substantial response to Worm's work came from the volumes of the Dane, Thomas Bartholin, who brought out in 1689 (still in Latin) his 'Three books of Danish antiquities on the causes of the contempt of death among the still-heathen Danes, drawn out of old books and documents up to now unedited'.[17] Bartholin's work was deservedly popular among the learned – Walter Scott was reading it eagerly more than a century after Bartholin's death[18] – for it is full of material drawn impartially from Norse saga and poetry, Classical literature, and medieval Latin chronicle. But Bartholin's point, obviously, is to stress the death-defying courage of his ancestors. 'Regnerus Lodbrok' appears as early as page 4, with Bartholin declaring that this 'greatest of kings and poets' (he cites a version of the line immediately after the skull-drinking ones above) 'though helpless amidst the adder-bites, ended the lines of his works with spirited voice' (and he cites the poem's last two lines in a slight paraphrase of Worm's Latin), 'Vitæ præteriunt horæ, / Ridens ego moriar', 'The hours of my life are past, / I shall die laughing'. Three hundred pages later Bartholin explains the 'causes of this contempt for death' by saying it is the result of the belief that those dead by violence will go to Valhalla. This gave the heathen Danes their ability to bear death, however horrible, 'æquo animo' (with settled spirit) – as one can see, he says, from Regnerus Lodbrok, who remained unmoved amidst torments 'as he believed firmly that he would soon go to be received in *Valhalla* from which he sang in his own heroic Epicedium that he would die laughing' (p. 318). Bartholin then quotes much the same lines as before (four from stanza 25, two from 29), in Norse and in Worm's Latin, this time sticking closer to Worm's text. The 'Death-Song' appears at least four more times in his work, usually with reference to the idea of drinking in Valhalla.[19] But one can see that it

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[17] Thomas Bartholinus [Bartholin], Antiquitatum Danicarum de Causis Contemptæ Mortis a Danis adhuc gentilibus libri tres ex vetustis codicis & monumentis hactenus ineditis congesti (Copenhagen: Bockenhoffer, 1689).

[18] See John M. Simpson, 'Scott and Old Norse Literature', in *Scott Bicentenary Essays: Selected Papers read at the Scott Bicentenary Conference*, ed. by Alan Bell (Edinburgh and London: Scottish Academic Press, 1973), 300–13 (p. 303).

[19] I have noted references to the poem on pp. 428, 535, 541, and 557–8.

would be hard to argue with Bartholin's admiration for the poem, in the seventeenth century (or for many years afterwards): he knew material that no-one else did, and wrote about it with passionate confidence.

Sneering was another matter, and this was the first English response (to Worm, not to Bartholin). Frank Farley, in his extremely thorough bibliographical account of 'Scandinavian Influences' on English poetry, found two English users of Worm in the seventeenth century, Robert Sheringham and Aylett Sammes.[20] The first, writing in Latin in 1670, merely quoted fourteen lines of Worm's version, but the second, while using only the same fourteen unaccredited lines six years later, indulged himself in both comment and paraphrase. Sammes was not impressed by Odin's 'drunken Paradice', nor by Ragnar's trousers, nor by his poetry: 'methinks I see the *Danish* king LOTHBROCK, in his Fur-Leather Breeches (for so his name importeth) in as good Verses as Ale could inspire, hugging himself with the hopes of Full-pots in the world to come'. Sammes renders the famous skull-lines as 'There we shall Tope our bellies-full / Of Nappy-Ale in full-brim'd Skull', and adds scornfully that Ragnar is impatient to arrive at 'this Immortal drinking [...] hear what breathings and pantings he hath after it, and how his bowels yearn to be at it'. The problem for Sammes, one can see, is already indecorum. If Dr Johnson was to declare 'I can scarce check my risibility' at the mention of blankets in *Macbeth*,[21] how much 'lower' was a king taking his nickname from nether garments, whether breeches or trousers – eventually they would be 'unmentionables'.[22] A further point of which Sammes is evidently conscious is the class-symbolism of drinking. Wine was the drink of gentlemen, beer or ale of the lower classes, certainly not of monarchs. Ragnar then, with his 'Full-pots' and his 'Nappy-Ale', could not be a proper king, and his death-scene, with its thoroughly unspiritual and un-Christian heaven, was not to be taken seriously. The history of the 'Death-Song' for the next century and more in England was to be the clash between Sammes's Classico-centric amusement, or embarrassment, and the nagging sense that there was a kind of unaffected dignity and power in the poem beneath all its violations of decorum, or taboo.

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[20] Robert Sheringham, *De Anglorum Gentis Origine* (Cambridge: Hayes, 1670), and Aylett Sammes, *Britannia Antiqua Illustrata* (London: Roycroft, 1676), both cited here from Farley, op. cit., pp. 62–4.

[21] In his essay in *Rambler* 168, 26 October 1751, see *The Rambler*, ed. by W. J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss, The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, vol. 5 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), p. 128.

[22] The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites this euphemism for 'trousers' from 1830.

Sir William Temple thus (than whom hardly anyone could be more Classico-centric) is prepared to set the 'Epicedium' against Lucan, and to allow that the whole poem 'is very well worth reading by any that love poetry', citing as usual stanzas 25 and 29 (which he numbers 25 and 26), and adding 'I am deceived, if in this sonnet [...] there be not a vein truly poetical, and in its kind Pindaric', if one makes due allowance for 'the different climates, fashions, opinions and languages of such distant countries'.[23] What really strikes Temple, however – and he confirms the Bartholin opinion by an account of the ancient Swedish devotion to suicide rather than dying in bed, retailed to him by the Swedish ambassador Count Oxenstern – is 'that such an alacrity or pleasure in dying was never expressed in any other writing, nor imagined among any other people' (op. cit., p. 368). 'Heroic virtue' cannot be denied to Ragnar, then, or to the poem. And yet details of it remained untranslatable into English. Working only from Temple's eighteen-line citation of Worm, Thomas Warton sr produced two 'Runic Odes' in 1748, very loosely rendering Temple's two stanzas.[24] But Warton could not use the word 'beer' in a serious context. Worm's 'Bibemus cerevisiam' becomes 'To my great Father's Feasts I go, / Where luscious Wines for ever flow, / Which from the hollow Sculls we drain / Of Kings in furious Combat slain'. The skulls were acceptable, but the beer was not, and one notes that mention of 'Balderi patris' (Balder's father), has become 'my great Father', with a certain veiling or evasion of heathenism.[25]

Such reactions to 'The Death-Song' were moreover profoundly reinforced, in several cases, by the appearance on the scene of the Ossian phenomenon. There is no space here for any account of the phenomenon or the controversy,[26] but it may be said that in the absence of James Macpherson's 'originals', the issue of the authenticity or otherwise of 'Ossian' soon became a matter of national pride in Scotland, and could only be argued on the basis of internal evidence such as inner consistency, correspondence with what was known about early cultural states, etc. It is also fair to say that 'Ossian' raised few of the challenges to decorum of the 'Death-Song'. Indeed,

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[23] The comments come from his essay 'Of Heroic Virtue' (first published 1692), cited here from *The Works of Sir William Temple*, 4 vols (London: Hamilton, 1814), III, 313–405 (p. 369).

[24] Thomas Warton, *Poems on Several Occasions*, ed. by Joseph Warton (Oxford: Manby and Cox, 1748), cited here from Farley, op. cit., pp. 65–6.

[25] In the same way Worm's *laetus cerevisiam [...]bibam* has become 'prepare full Bowls, / Fit Banquet for heroic Souls'. Beer would not be 'fit' for proper heroes.

[26] It has been recently summed up in Fiona Stafford's 'Introduction' to James Macpherson, *The Poems of Ossian and Related Works*, ed. by Howard Gaskill (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), pp. v-xxi.

it might have been said, if anyone had thought to say it, that the strongest evidence *against* the age and authenticity of 'Ossian' was that it harmonised so well with the needs and sentiments of the century that produced it: no beer, no hairy trousers, but plenty of (Blair's phrase) 'tenderness and sublimity'. 'Ragnar's Death-Song' was, however, drawn into the argument; indeed the first extensive discussion of the poem in English appears in Hugh Blair's *A Critical Dissertation on the Poems of Ossian Son of Fingal* (1763), where it takes up fourteen pages (admittedly consisting largely of a reprint of Worm's entire twenty-nine Latin stanzas).[27] In spite of this last thoughtful feature, it is often not easy to make out exactly what Blair is translating. He begins by saying that one has to consider 'the true Gothic poetry' to see if it has any bearing on Gaelic; gives the poem's setting in the snake-pit; and proposes to 'translate as much as may give the English reader an idea of the spirit and strain of this kind of poetry'. Blair then omits stanza 1, translates stanzas 2 – 7 fairly closely, gives a truncated form of the first two lines of stanza 8, 'Loud roared the swords in the plains of Lano', but then moves immediately to a line from stanza 10, 'Virgo deploravit matutinam lanienam' (The virgin long bewailed the slaughter of that morning). Blair then stops to comment, remarking (quite correctly) that 'The images are not much varied; the noise of arms, the streaming of blood, and the feasting the birds of prey, often recurring'. Ragnar's lamentation for his sons in stanza 15, however, strikes Blair as:

> very singular. A Grecian or Roman poet would have introduced the virgins or nymphs of the wood, bewailing the untimely fall of a young hero. But, says our Gothic poet, 'when Rognvaldus was slain, for him mourned all the hawks of heaven', as lamenting a benefactor who had so liberally supplied them with prey. (p. 18)

Blair here follows Worm's 'Iste venit summus super accipitres / Luctus in gladiorum ludo', a line which Schlauch renders as 'That was bitterest blow to the men of his band'. Ólafsson's transcript read *hauka* (hawks), where the *Corpus Poeticum*, and later editions, read *hölða* (nobles). Blair then says that 'The poems conclude [sic] with sentiments of the highest bravery and contempt of death', and translates stanzas 22 to the end, the gnomic and personal stanzas.

His conclusion (pp. 20–21) is that 'This is such poetry as we might

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[27] Blair, *Dissertation* (London: Becket and de Hondt, 1763), cited here from the second edition (London: Becket and de Hondt, 1765). The *Dissertation* is conveniently reprinted in Gaskill, op. cit., pp. 343–401, with Blair's long note containing Worm's Latin text of the 'Death-Song' on pp. 543–5.

expect from a barbarous nation. It breathes a most ferocious spirit. It is wild, harsh and irregular; but at the same time animated and strong'. Blair's point, though, is of course that:

> when we open the works of Ossian, a very different scene presents itself [...]. When we turn from the poetry of Lodbrog to that of Ossian, it is like passing from a savage desart, into a fertile and cultivated country.

So much the more implausible is Ossian, one might say, and this argument, though never actually voiced, does give Blair a good deal of trouble, obliging him to distinguish sharply the barbarous Gothic tribes from the civilised Celtic ones, but to concede that the era of Ossianic civilisation must have been very far in the past, far from the 'gross ignorance and barbarity' of the Scottish Highlands in more recent times (Blair, though a Scot, was a Lowlander and no Jacobite).

The Scots who repeated and varied his arguments were likewise supporters of the Hanoverian settlement. Henry Home, Lord Kames, in the wandering account of 'Manners' in his *Sketches of the History of Man* (1774),[28] also draws the 'Death-Song' into his very extensive musings on Ossian, though he can only account for the contradiction between Ossianic sublimity and Highland savagery by suggesting that the poet must have been inspired, but was neverthless recording 'the manners of his country' – perhaps in the reign of Caracalla (188–217 AD)? Home tries, however, to make some *rapprochement* between Ragnar and Ossian by arguing that there is a certain vein of sentiment even in the former: 'The ancient poems of Scandinavia contain the warmest expressions of love and regard for the female sex. In an ode of King Regner Lodbrog, a very ancient poem, we find the following sentiments [...]', and Home cites (not very appositely) a composite of stanzas 11 – 13, which moves from ten thousand corpses and dews of blood to 'The pleasure of that day was like the clasping a fair virgin in my arms'. 'These Hyboreans', Home comments, 'had early learned to combine the ideas of love and of military prowess'. In his *History of Women* (1782),[29] William Alexander, another Scot, repeats Home's first composite translation word for word, slightly expands his second quotation, and then ventures on his own version of the last two stanzas. But his point is now to defend the Northern peoples from accusations

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[28] Home, *Sketches*, 2 vols (Edinburgh: Creech; London: Strahan and Cadell, 1774), cited here from the 'new edition, in three volumes' (Edinburgh: Creech, Bell and Bradfute; London: Cadell and Davies, 1813), I, 387.

[29] Alexander, *The History of Women from the Earliest Antiquity to the Present Time*, cited here from the third edition, 2 vols (London: Dilly; Stockton: Christopher, 1782), repr. with intro. by Jane Rendall (Bristol: Thoemmes, 1995), II, 227–8.

of barbarism by saying that they treated women with more respect than the Greeks and Romans; though their lack of courtesy or passion, as compared with 'the Asiatics and other southern people', was explained by their preoccupation with drink and violence. While Eastern religions taught 'that a great part of the joys of Paradise consisted in the sensual enjoyment of beautiful women [...] the Northerns were satisfied with having their cups quickly replenished by them'. For all his national pride, Alexander is edging back in the direction of Sammes; while William Bagshaw Stevens, in his *Poems* of 1775, not only repeated Temple's choice of stanzas for translation (25 and 29), but also silently appropriated Temple's sentence about the 'Alacrity or Pleasure of dying'.[30]

This background of partial or derivative comment perhaps helps to explain the effect of Thomas Percy's not immediately especially striking version of the poem in 1763, and his comments on it seven years later. Percy had probably not encountered the poem first in either Worm or Bartholin, though he cites the latter and was ultimately dependent on the former, but in the two volumes by Paul Henri Mallet eventually translated by Percy in 1770 as *Northern Antiquities*.[31] But Mallet's version of the 'Death-Song', in his second volume of 1756, had followed most previous tradition in being both selective and fairly wild. He offered (in French translation) stanzas 2 and 4, then stanza 13 (the 'fair virgin' stanza), stanzas 20 and 22 conflated (without the 'young widow' line), and the last six stanzas, 23 – 29. Whatever he thought of Mallet in the beginning or overall, by 1770 Percy was clearly not impressed by his handling of this particular poem. In a footnote to Mallet's introductory remarks (vol 2, p. 227), he refers to 'our elegant author' taking 'great liberties' with the poems 'in order to accommodate them to the taste of French readers'; refers those interested to his own prior publication of 1763; goes on on the next page to quibble with the rendering of the poem's opening refrain by Worm as 'Pugnavimus ensibus' and Mallet as 'Nous nous sommes battus à coups d'épée'; and adds in a further footnote (pp. 229–30) that 'I cannot help thinking, that the reader will censure our ingenious Author, as not having exerted his usual good taste in selecting, when he

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[30] William Bagshaw Stevens, *Poems, consisting of Indian Odes and Miscellaneous Pieces* (Oxford: n. pub., 1775), pp. 81–5.

[31] Mallet's *L'Introduction à l'histoire de Danemarck*, with its second volume of translations, *Monuments de la mythologie et de la poésie des Celtes et particulièrement des anciens Scandinaves*, had appeared in 1755-6 (vol 1, Copenhagen: Berling; vol. 2, Copenhagen: Philibert). It was translated anonymously by Thomas Percy as *Northern Antiquities*, 2 vols (London: Carnan, 1770), repr. with intro. by Burton Feldman (New York and London: Garland, 1979).

finds he has omitted such stanzas as the following' – and Percy adds four more stanzas, 14 (with the 'young widow' line), 10, 17 and 15 (the last still with the lamenting hawks). 'Elegant', 'ingenious', 'taste', 'good taste': there is a hint of criticism in Percy's phrases, as if conscious that the criteria of neo-Classicism are not appropriate here. And the strength of Percy's complete translation in his *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry* (1763)[32] is simply that on the whole he leaves the poem alone. He is clearly hostile to the Ossianisers, saying that of course his work must suffer from 'comparison with those beautiful pieces', but that 'till the Translator of those poems thinks it proper to produce his originals, it is impossible to say whether they do not owe their superiority, if not their whole existence entirely to himself' ('Preface', p. vi). Reading between the lines, one can guess that Percy was aware of the criticism made above, that 'Ossian' was as popular as it was precisely because it offered no challenge to contemporary taste; and he made little effort accordingly to tone down the provocations of the 'Death-Song'. Percy translates the poem entire, from Worm's Latin, and gives Worm's 'Islandic Original' entire in an appendix. His notes point out some of the examples of Norse 'poetic diction', so rejecting the charge that barbaric poems must be simple and direct, and explain his own use of plain words (like 'din') by saying that it is the same word as the original, so refusing to censure the poem for verbal indecorum. In the vexed stanza 25 Percy continues in the same error over skulls as everyone else, but translates the Worm original 'Drekum BIOR at bragde' (the capitals are Percy's) without embarrassment or evasion as 'Soon [...] we shall drink BEER'. A note explains, citing Bartholin (p. 535) as authority, that 'BEER and MEAD were the only nectar of the northern nations. Odin alone of all the gods was supposed to drink WINE' (p. 40). At the end Percy ignores another taboo by translating Ragnar's last words in the plainest possible way as 'I die laughing' (p. 42).

Laughter had already come under the general ban on the expression of unseemly or ungentlemanly emotion. Lord Chesterfield advised his son, in 1748:

> I could heartily wish that you may be often seen to smile, but never heard to laugh while you live [...]. In my mind there is nothing so illiberal, and so ill-bred, as audible laughter.[33]

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[32] Percy, *Five Pieces of Runic Poetry, translated from the Islandic Language* (London: Dodsley, 1763). 'The Dying Ode of Regner Lodbrog', with its 'Introduction', is on pp. 23–42.

[33] See *The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope*, ed. by Bonamy Dobrée, 6 vols (New York: AMS, 1932), III, 1115–6. Dobrée notes that the opinion was shared by Pope, Swift and Congreve, though others – see Colin Franklin, *Lord Chesterfield, his*

Most eighteenth-century Ragnars are duly censored into decorum, in this as in their drinking habits. Stevens, an Oxford man, as he declares on his title-page (op. cit. above), shows his propriety in avoiding at once death, laughter, crude parataxis, and the company of pagan polytheistic gods in his version of stanza 29. Its clause structure is so comparatively complex as almost to defy excerpting, but it ends in the 'happier Home':

> Where, with my Friends who nobly died,
> Slain in Battle by my Side,
> On loftiest Seat, for ever gay,
> I'll drink the smiling Hours away;
> The Hours of Life are now no more,
> With Joy I seek that happier Shore.

The 'Friends', the 'smiling Hours', and the 'happier Shore' are all Stevens's; the Æsir and the defiant laughter have been deleted. In stanza 25 beer has turned into 'the joyous Draught', and 'Hitt hlœgir mek iafnan' (It always makes me laugh), has become 'This shall give the constant Smile'.

Other eighteenth-century attempts at verse translation show the same inability to render the original without censorship. Hugh Downman, in 1790, accepts that the poem's author 'exhibits a species of savage greatness, a fierce and wild kind of sublimity, and a noble contempt of danger and death', but notes also his 'unacquaintance with the nicer rules of composition'.[34] Though his version is complete, and fairly direct, he still skirts the standard challenges to taste. Beer in stanza 25 is 'the generous mead', 'it always makes me laugh' turns into 'A never-failing joy I find', Ragnar's last line, so memorable in its plainness, becomes 'With joy I yield my vital breath, / And laugh in the last pangs of death'. The version of stanzas 22 – 29 by Downman's friend Richard Polwhele two years later[35] is much more exclamatory – 'Yes! our joys shall then be full [...] Ah! I feel my body riv'n! [...] Lo! I hurry to my end!' – but is still not to be betrayed into unseemliness at the end:

Character and 'Characters' (Aldershot: Scolar, 1993), p. 12 – took a different view.

[34] Hugh Downman, *Poems*, 2nd edn (Exeter: Trewman, 1790). 'The Death-Song of Regner Lodbrock, King of Denmark' is on pp. 144–63, with quotation on pp. 145–6.

[35] *Poems, chiefly by Gentlemen of Devonshire and Cornwall*, 2 vols (Bath: Cruttwell, 1792). The editor does not give his name, but is known to have been Richard Polwhele. On pp. 25–9 of vol. 2, 'Part of the Epicedium of Regner Lodbrog Translated' is signed 'P', an abbreviation not explained in the editor's introduction: presumably the translator was Polwhele himself.

Now my bright career is run!
Quivers yet my vital fire!
Gasping – panting – lo! 'tis done!
With a smile I shall expire!

Oddly, the most self-consciously accurate and scholarly production of them all is at the same time the most dictional and, in a sense, unfaithful. This is James Johnstone's *Lodbrokar-Quida* of 1782.[36] Johnstone, another Scot, was chaplain to the British envoy to Denmark, and appears knowledgeable as regards Scandinavian languages. His small privately-printed volume offers facing page Norse text and English translation, followed by a much more literal translation into Latin prose, one which does not depend on Worm/Ólafsson. Johnstone also gave a table of *Variantes Lectiones* (which includes *Haulda*, 'Baronibus' for *hauka* in stanza 15), a *Glossarium*, and more than twenty pages of 'Notes for the English Reader', though they are concerned to a large extent with trying to locate Ragnar's battles in Scotland. He was certainly the most scrupulous of English-language translators / editors up to a much later date: yet he found more phrases in the poem to shy at than any of his predecessors. At the end of stanza 13 he clearly found the 'fair virgin' idea too licentious, translating 'biarta brúði' (not unreasonably) as 'blooming bride'; however 'í bing [...] leggja', 'to lay in bed', was definitely unacceptable, so that the last two lines of the stanza become, 'the sight was pleasing to my heart as when my blooming bride I seated by me on the chair of state'. Kissing has gone from the next stanza as well, which now ends, 'when I welcomed the youthful widow to my throne preeminent'. As the translation proceeds it becomes steadily more decorous: 'Hverr lá þverr of annan' (each one [of the dead] lay across the other), is rendered 'In heaps promiscuous we piled the enemy'; 'At sam-togi sverða' becomes 'at the rude interview of swords'; beer in stanza 25 is 'the amber beverage', and in 29 'the barley's mellow'd juices'. The laughter of stanza 25 has become 'a never-failing consolation for my spirit', and the poem's last line has been turned into a thoroughly decorous, almost saintly exit, with 'The smiles of death compose my placid visage'. (What, one might wonder, *are* 'the smiles of death'?) For all his care Johnstone seems almost afraid of his subject, or at least of exposing it to English-speaking readers (perhaps female ones?): his Latin rendering is much more faithful.

Nevertheless the poem, and the other Norse texts appearing on the

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[36] James Johnstone, *Lodbrokar-Quida; or The Death-Song of Lodbrog*, now first correctly printed from several manuscripts, with a free English translation (n.p.: n. pub., 1782).

market, was creating its own audience by mere exposure. As linguistic knowledge increased, the point was borne in on British, and particularly Scottish readers, that there was a similarity in vocabulary between Norse and English, especially dialect English and even vulgar English.[37] Regional and national pride could therefore be opposed to Classical decorum, and make the case that the latter was an inapropriate guide. William Herbert's *Select Icelandic Poetry* of 1804[38] marks a significant step forward, not only in that he for the first time detected the mistake over *Var-at*, so that he translates 'Twas not, I trow, like wooing rest / On gentle maiden's snowy breast', 'Twas not like kissing widow sweet / Reclining in the highest seat',[39] but also in his steady use of dialect words related to the originals. Percy had picked out 'din' from *dynn*, and 'hewed' from *hiöggom* but Herbert uses and footnotes 'tined' [= 'lost'] for *tyndi*, 'stour' from *styr*, 'kemp' from *kappa* (though this is not in the original), and 'thane' from *þegn*; he also uses without footnoting archaic, Norse-derived or Norse-cognate words like 'garr'd', 'brast', 'bairns', 'wroken'. He is trying, in a word, to be authentic, in a way that will eventually become philological. And this was the way in which Norse literature would eventually reach respectability;[40] though it has to be conceded that Herbert, for all his dawning philology, was not going to be drawn very far into indecorum, his last lines reading all too familiarly:

> High-seated in their blest abodes
> I soon shall quaff the drink of Gods.
> The hours of life have glided by;
> I fall; but smiling shall I die.

As was said at the start, however, the *Krákumál* has been left out of the respectability that the field as a whole has gained, and has joined blood-eagles, berserkers and skull-quaffing as part of the popular image of 'Vikingdom', about which scholars are embarrassed and which they would rather do without.[41] In so far as this image rests on

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[37] See Andrew Wawn, *The Anglo Man: Þorleifur Repp, Philology and Nineteenth-Century Britain*, Studia Islandica, 49 (Reykjavik: Bókaútgáfamenningarsjóðs, 1991), pp. 107–15, for the specifically Scottish version of this theory.

[38] Herbert, *Select Icelandic Poetry, translated from the Originals; with Notes* (London: Reynolds, 1804). 'The Dying Song of Regner Lodbrock' is on pp. 25–49.

[39] Herbert commented sardonically on the mistake on pp. 117–8, with Gordon, op. cit. p. lxxi, repeating his sarcasm.

[40] Compare the conclusions of Geraldine Barnes, 'The Old Norse Discovery of America and the American Discovery of Old Norse', in the forthcoming *Studies in Medievalism 11* (1999).

[41] The slow fading of the poem from esteem in the nineteenth century – it is still

proven error and mistranslation, one can only agree with the rejections of Ker and Gordon. Nevertheless, even if one discounts those errors, one has to recognise that the *Krákumál* has *remained* an embarrassing poem. It is easy to laugh (or smile) at the mistakes of Ólafsson, Percy and the rest, and to feel superior to the forced euphemisms of Johnstone, Downman or Polwhele. However, one reason for our contemporary aversion to it must be that it has moved only from one set of provocations to another. The 'Death-Song' is a cruel poem, with continuing exultation in the clang of weapons, the streams of blood, the piles of carrion: this trespasses on the modern taboo on approval of violence, perhaps the strongest (overt) taboo in modern (liberal) culture. It is also evidently immodest, trespassing on a second taboo about boasting: stanza 28 runs, 'Least of men did I think that any other king should be more famous than myself', to be toned down in translation both by Vigfusson and Powell ('that any king should ever prove my better') and by Schlauch ('that another king Would overmaster me at the end'). The last stanzas are overtly vengeful.

Yet all this is contextualised by the imagined situation, the speaker enduring death by torture, which clearly aims to make the boasting and the lack of regret into a proof of fortitude. Tolkien might, if he had chosen to, have selected the *Krákumál* to exemplify the 'theory of courage [...] the creed of unyielding will', which he turned against Ker in his famous essay.[42] But it would have involved him in a complex argument about the preservation of images of paganism by Christians, in an argument already complex enough. Nevertheless the *Krákumál* does continue to offer an alternative model of 'heroic virtue' to those officially sanctioned or Classically endorsed, one which centres on lack of compromise and also (another anathema to modern culture) lack of political point. The strong distaste for it expressed in the last century of its reception is an attempt to construct one kind of 'medievalism', just as the mingled fascination and condescension of Sharon Turner, Thomas Hughes, Thomas Percy and their predecessors constructed another: one furthermore just as tacitly rooted in ideas of decorum.

'The Death-Song of Ragnar Lodbrog', in most of its seventeenth- and eighteenth-century forms, is a fine example of what William Paden calls elsewhere in this volume a 'simulacrum', a copy of a copy, a translation of a translation, its original usually not known and in fact

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known to Hughes, but has been all but totally eradicated from I. A. Blackwell's self-consciously superior revised edition of *Northern Antiquities* (London: Bohn, 1847) – would be another story, connected with the growing availability of other Old Norse texts and the creation of a new 'Classical' canon for Old Norse literature.

[42] J. R. R. Tolkien, 'Beowulf: the Monsters and the Critics', *PBA*, 22 (1936), 245–95 (p. 262).

physically discarded. The drive of nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship has been to reverse that status, to get back to a purer and more original text, a *Krákumál*. And yet the recovered *Krákumál* still proves unsatisfactory. It is time, perhaps, for reworkings of the 'Death Song' to shed their 'subaltern status', and for the poem's 'potential for metamorphosis' to be recognized; as also for the relationship between the earliest and the latest reactions to be acknowledged. The poem should be seen, in all its many versions, as one which has provoked, and which continues to provoke both intense engagement and anxious disengagement, in different ways, for different but not necessarily dissimilar reasons.

SAINT LOUIS UNIVERSITY

CARLYLE AND THE MEDIEVALISM OF THE NORTH

ALICE CHANDLER

1.

MEDIEVALISM IS SUCH A complex social phenomenon that it is difficult to define comprehensively except in the most general terms. Umberto Eco writes of 'ten little Middle Ages'.[1] But there are far more than ten different and discrete medievalisms, and certainly many big ones. All medievalisms treat the Middle Ages as a 'historical entity capable of offering meaningful and even satisfying intellectual, aesthetic, political, and religious images to subsequent societies'.[2] But whether the images are used to sustain myths of national greatness or critiques of national shortcomings, religious reform or religious revival, political radicalism or political reaction, depends upon time and place. It is accurate to describe the medieval revival as an influential social myth that began almost before the close of the Middle Ages and that lasted until the First World War.[3] But any attempt to create a general theory of medievalism must be sufficiently nuanced and elaborate to allow not simply for variations by time and country but even for contradictions within the same place, period and author. The medieval revival was widely influential precisely because it adapted to changing circumstances and because it offered a wide repertory of alternatives, all justified by an appeal to the historic past.

Protracted, pervasive, and protean, medievalism was also polarized. In England, the authority of the Middle Ages was used to validate both freedom *and* order, egalitarianism *and* hierarchism, liberalism *and* conservativism, self-expression *and* self-sacrifice. Christopher Hill's classic essay on the Norman Yoke traces the elaborate

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[1] Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality*, trans. by William Weaver (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), p. 67.

[2] John Simons, 'Medievalism as Cultural Process in Pre-industrial Popular Literature', *Medievalism in England II*, ed. by Leslie J. Workman and Kathleen Verduin, Studies in Medievalism, VII (Cambridge: Brewer, 1995), 5.

[3] The definition of the Middle Ages as the period lasting from the fifth century to the fifteenth was common in the nineteenth century. Henry Hallam's *View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages*, first published in 1818, states that while 'it is not possible to fix accurate limits to the Middle Ages [...] the ten centuries from the fifth to the fifteenth seem, in a general point of view, to constitute that period'.

superstructures of political belief that both radicals and conservatives erected on the basis of medieval precedent. He points out that 'paradoxically, those who believed that English institutions originated in the violence [of the Norman Conquest] were the conservatives: believers in the continuity of these institutions were revolutionaries'.[4] But even within that simplified dichotomy, there were still further fractures and contradictions. Reformers seeking precedents in Anglo-Saxon polity might be Whigs such as Sir Edward Coke, who sought to justify the sanctity of property through appeal to Anglo-Saxon common law, or far more radical Levellers or Diggers, who interpreted the structure of Anglo-Saxon society to argue for drastic legal reform or even the abolition of private land-holding.

Clare Simmons's *Reversing the Conquest: History and Myth in 19th Century British Literature* carries Hill's paradoxes through the Romantic and Victorian periods. Simmons's main concern is to explore the contradictions between 'the radical idealization of Saxon freedom [...] [and] conservative nostalgia for feudal order'.[5] Using paired Saxon and Norman historical figures, such as Richard and John, Becket and Henry, Harold and William, she traces the interplay of these divisions as they occurred between 'Saxonists' and 'Normanists'; that is, between those who idealized the pre-Conquest period of Saxon independence and those who respected that primitive society only as it formed the basis of the more complex feudal society that evolved after the Conquest. Here, too, there are contradictions within contradictions. The Saxonists' idealization of the liberties of free born Englishmen coexisted, for example, with an unquestioned belief in the value of a loyalty or fealty that included 'dying for one's lord'.[6]

Although seen as the core of the English character and political system, Saxon liberties were never viewed as originating in England itself. The tradition of identifying English liberties with the pre-Conquest period can be traced back to the late sixteenth-century; but it was from the start intertwined with the myth of Teutonic freedom that had arisen in Germany at the very start of that century and that had spilled over into the Scandinavia as part of the even larger myth of the 'Gothic' or northern origins of the Germanic character. William Camden's *Britannia* (1586), for example, stresses the Germanic origins of the Anglo-Saxon people. He sees in that German origin the

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[4] Christopher Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution: Studies in the Interpretation of the English Revolution of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Mercury Books, 1962), p. 67.

[5] Clare A. Simmons, *Reversing the Conquest: History and Myth in 19th-Century British Literature* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990), p. 79.

[6] Simmons, p. 201.

seed of Saxon 'morall and martiall vertues.'[7] Such linkages of the liberties of Englishmen with the customs of their Germanic forebears continued throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with ramifications into literature and the arts and well as politics. Greater historical knowledge, which somewhat diminished the mythic dimension of the Anglo-Saxons, and the advent of an industrial age necessarily tempered some of the more extravagant interpretations of pre-Conquest society. But the belief in Teutonic 'blood' – the *character* of British institutions and peoples – kept the Anglo-Saxon ideal alive. By the early nineteenth century, however, that Saxon myth was increasingly challenged by an emerging neo-feudalism that used the high Middle Ages, rather than the Saxon period, to measure and criticize contemporary social conditions. Bolstered by a racial – and ultimately racist – interpretation of history, the Saxonist concept of early medieval freedom remained a potent political icon for Liberals right throughout the nineteenth century. But the countervailing Tory glorification of the post-Conquest period and of a feudal and hierarchical political structure increasingly pervaded history, literature, and the arts.

These orthogonal views of the past split the reform agenda. Historians such as Macaulay, Stubbs, Freeman, and Froude, used Saxon constitutionalism to undergird the Liberal commitment to expanded political and economic liberty, at the same time that writers in the conservative tradition were appealing to post-Conquest feudalism to validate a largely agrarian and paternalistic view of reform. As is well known, the Tory politics of Young England grew out of a nineteenth-century medievalist literary tradition starting with Scott and climaxing with Ruskin. Scott's *Ivanhoe*, although ultimately accepting the inevitable progress of history, neatly balances between the Saxon and Norman viewpoints. Later writers did not usually maintain such equilibrium.

Such polarization between freedom and order was not only political. Medievalist ideals of individual behaviour were similarly divided. Followers of the Saxonist or Teutonic tradition stressed personal energy, independence, and integrity. Followers of the neo-feudal tradition praised honour, chivalry, and self-sacrifice. Charles Kingsley's *Hereward the Wake*, for example, embodies both the political liberalism and personal ideals of conduct associated with the Saxonist tradition. Kingsley's Anglo-Saxons are, he admits, the descendants of 'half savage, half heathen' Teutonic tribes. But they are also 'free [...] with the divine instinct of freedom, and all the self-

[7] Hugh A. MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History: Trojans, Teutons, and Anglo-Saxons* (Montreal: Harvest House and University Press of New England, 1982), p. 46.

help and energy which spring thereout'.[8] By contrast, Kenelm Digby's model English gentleman is built on a late medieval model and exemplifies a Christian code, based on service and altruism, that instinctively recognizes that atheism and democracy are evil.

Nineteenth-century medievalism thus embraced both political and personal contradictions. The Middle Ages justified both Liberal and Tory paternalism; they also provided a repertory of language and images to validate opposing ideals of conduct. Looking for guidance to the post-Conquest period, 'medievalist discourse employed an array of conceptual terms that denoted [...] patriarchal ideals [such] as chivalry, manliness, selflessness, gallantry, honour, duty, fidelity to the crown as well as to the beloved'.[9] (Or, as Kenelm Digby phrased it, 'Chivalry is only a name for that general spirit or state of mind which disposes men to heroic and generous actions, and keeps them conversant with all that is beautiful and sublime in the intellectual and moral world.'[10]) Taking a pre-Conquest outlook that focused on Saxon liberties, however, gave a different perspective. A moderate such as Bulwer-Lytton might see in the feudal period a deterioration of Anglo-Saxon purity and argue instead for a return to that 'patient endurance, love of justice, and freedom – the manly sense of duty rather than the chivalric sentiment of honour'.[11] A more energetic Saxonist, such as Charles Kingsley, would create a rugged character like Hereward the Wake, who cries out, 'I am free as long as the wind blows out of the clouds!' In Kingsley's medieval framework, the 'proud spirit of personal independence', linked to the fierceness and strength of nature, produces an 'average of man[...]doubtless superior, both in body and mind, to the average of man now'.[12] The operative words in Kingsley's novel are 'fierceness' and 'strength', not altruism, self-sacrifice, duty, or manliness – all of those last words part of the mantra of chivalric medievalism. A medievalism based on Teutonic heroism is, at its extreme, politically and behaviourally incompatible with the neo-feudal, chivalric ideal.

Based primarily on his authorship of *Past and Present*, Carlyle is usually cited as a neo-feudalist who looked to the paternalistic and

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[8] Charles Kingsley, *Hereward the Wake* (London: J. M. Dent, 1952), p. 114.

[9] Anthony H. Harrison, 'Medievalism and the Ideologies of Victorian Poetry', *Medievalism in England*, ed. by Leslie J. Workman and Kathleen Verduin, *Studies in Medievalism*, IV (Cambridge: Brewer, 1992), 220.

[10] Kenelm Henry Digby, *The Broad Stone of Honour: Godefridus* (1844), p. 9.

[11] Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Dedicatory Epistle to *Harold* (1848), quoted in Raymond Chapman, *The Sense of the Past in Victorian Literature* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p. 10.

[12] Kingsley, pp. 116, 1.

hierarchical structures of the high Middle Ages for solutions to the 'Condition of England' problem. Hugh MacDougall, however, lists Carlyle among the Saxonists in his study *Racial Myth in English History: Trojans, Teutons and Anglo-Saxons*,[13] and he is justified in doing so. Despite his feudalist tendencies, Carlyle's long association with German thought had familiarized him with the German and Scandinavian Teutonism that formed the broader context for English Anglo-Saxonism; many of his writings show a wide-ranging awareness of the main currents of German thought. His writings also show considerable knowledge of the lengthening list of English and Continental translations and histories, especially of Norse and Icelandic materials, that were beginning to build a scholarly base of knowledge regarding the early Middle Ages. Three works written over a more than forty-year period show Carlyle dealing directly with what I shall call the 'medievalism of the north'–*The Nibelungen Lied* (1831), the essay on Odin in *Heroes and Hero Worship* (1841), and *The Early Kings of Norway* (1875). These three works, each dealing with the northern tradition, help illuminate some of the contradictions in *Past and Present* (1845), which focuses mainly on post-Conquest society. All four works illustrate the interactions between German and English historical writing in the nineteenth-century, clarify some of the contradictions between conflicting medievalisms, and provide a useful overview of Carlyle's own curve of development and the inner dynamics of his beliefs.

2.

Carlyle begins his essay on *The Nibelungen Lied* with a review of the vast stream of literature about the Germanic Middle Ages. He sees the flourishing and often-confusing proliferation of medieval commentaries and source materials as part of a multinational 'antiquarian tendency in literature, a fonder, more earnest looking back into the Past'. Citing Percy's *Reliques* and C. H. Muller's *Collection of German Poems from the Twelfth, Thirteenth and Fourteen Centuries* as examples of such revitalization of the past, he credits A. W. Schlegel with having awakened 'something like a universal popular feeling on the subject' of the *Nibelungen Lied.* Although Carlyle cites only a few of the large number of German or Scandinavian scholars who had been dealing with Norse materials ever since the sixteenth century, he does acknowledge Mallet's highly influential *Introduction to the History of Denmark* and *Edda; or*

[13] MacDougall, p. 95.

Documents of the Mythology and the Poetry of the Ancient Scandinavians.[14]

As a historical writer, Carlyle is acutely aware of the uneven quality of the texts and commentaries with which he must deal and of the difficulties in unfolding a past that is hidden deep in the mists of time. He remarks that the Germans now look back 'and find that they, too, as well as the Greeks, have their Heroic Age and round the old Valhalla, as their Northern Pantheon, a world of demi-gods and wonders'. But he also perceives that the 'whole system of antique Teutonic Fiction and Mythology' can only shed 'here and there a real though feeble and uncertain glimmer over what was once the total darkness of the old Time'. History, he claims, is not just a tree with many branchings, but 'a Hall of Mirrors, where in the pale light each mirror reflects, convexly or concavely, not only some real Object, but the Shadows of this in other mirrors; which again do the like for it: till in such reflection and re-reflection the whole immensity is filled with dimmer and dimmer shapes; and no firm scene lies round us, but a dislocated, distorted chaos, fading away on all hands, in the distance, into utter night.'[15]

Although the origins of the Nibelungen story are shrouded in mystery, the material is important; for the 'mighty maze of Northern archeology' belongs 'especially to us English *Teutones* as well as to the Germans.' Carlyle claims that the *Nibelungen* poem is also important because it belongs to an earlier period of the Middle Ages before the unfortunate 'Knight-errant dialect', with its 'fantastic monstrosities' and chivalric trivialities had corrupted the purity of medieval art and thought. Although Carlyle is careful not to sentimentalize the early Middle Ages, the Nibelungen essay, unlike the remainder of his Norse writings, often echoes the popular Romantic 'soft primitivism' that saw the childhood of humanity as a period of innocence and joy. He finds in the *Nibelungen* poet 'an instinctive art, far different from acquired artifice [...] in language, in purity and depth of feeling, in fineness of invention'. The poet's use of language has 'a trustfulness and childlike innocence.' A 'deep flood of Sadness and Strife play lightly in little curling billows, like seas in summer'. As Carlyle sees it, 'a whole infinitude of patience and love, and heroic strength lie revealed' in the *Nibelungen* poem, with 'deeds of high temper, harsh self-denial, daring and death [...] embodied in that soft, quick flowing joyfully modulated verse'. Time miniaturizes the scene for him, so that the events of the poem are 'real, yet tiny, elf-like, and

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[14] Thomas Carlyle, 'The Nibelungen Lied', *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays in Five Volumes* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1896–99; repr. New York: AMS, 1980) II, 216.
[15] Carlyle, 'The Nibelungen Lied', 218–20.

beautified'. It is a world in which 'the wondrous and the common live amicably together'.[16]

In keeping with this idyllic vision of the medieval poem, if not the medieval period, Carlyle describes Siegfried as a prompt, gay, peaceably fearless hero, with fine traits of chivalrous delicacy. The tragic aspects of Norse myth Carlyle displaces on to the faithful retainer Hagen. Carlyle's describes Hagen as rising 'in tragic greatness; so helpful, so prompt and strong is he, and true to the death without hope' – a hero whose sins are pardonable, 'if sin ever can be pardoned [...] by [his] loyal faith [...] free daring and heroic constancy'. Hagen, according to Carlyle, is 'the image of every brave man fighting with Necessity'.[17] Hagen is also a perfect exemplar of the contradictions implicit in freedom and loyalty. In the best Saxonist tradition, Hagen does truly 'die for his lord'.

Refracted through Carlyle's bifocal world view, the *Nibelungen* story is at once an innocent and joyous poem from the early days of the world and a tragedy in which 'a shadow of coming Fate, as it were, a low inarticulate voice of Doom falls, from the first, out of that charmed Nibelungen-land' and stirred by 'evil passion [...] enlarges itself into a crime...[until] Sin rolls on like a devouring fire, [...] the guilty and the innocent are alike encircled with it, and whole land is ashes, and a whole race is swept away.' Attempting to reconcile his own disparate descriptions of the poet and the poem, Carlyle straddles his contradictions by stating: 'Strangely has the old Singer, in these his loose melodies, modulated the wild narrative into a poetic whole [...]. A fateful gloom now hangs over the fortunes of the Nibelungen, which deepens and deepens as they march onwards towards the judgment-bar.' He sees the final scene as terrible: 'We have heard of battles and massacres, and deadly struggles in siege and storm; but seldom has even the poet's imagination pictured anything so fierce and terrible as this.' Even so, Carlyle concludes, the poem is a 'creation from the old ages, still bright and balmy if we visit it'.[18]

3.

Ten years later, in *Heroes and Hero Worship*, Carlyle still gave credence to the 'child-like greatness [...] [of] primitive nations.' He also still pondered, as he would do throughout his life, the 'great mystery of TIME [...] illimitable, silent, never-resting...on which we and

[16] Carlyle, 'The Nibelungen Lied', 219, 229, 234–37.
[17] Carlyle, 'The Nibelungen Lied', 240–41, 261.
[18] Carlyle, 'The Nibelungen Lied', 238, 261, 263, 273.

all the Universe swim like exhalations, like apparitions which *are* and then *are not*.' But he had added to his previous conception of Necessity as being part of Norse myth, his own personal interpretation of the Universe as a 'thousandfold complexity of Forces [...]. Force, Force, everywhere Force; and we ourselves a mysterious Force at the centre of that.'[19]

With that new concept of Force, comes a new vision of early medieval man – 'wild', 'Ishmaelitish', and 'rude'. Odin, the embodiment of that vision, 'in his wild Norse vesture, with his wild beard and eyes, his rude Norse speech and ways, was a man like us'.[20] Carlyle's new notion of medieval man brought him closer than he had been ten years before in the *Nibelungen* essay to writers such as Kingsley and others in the 'hard primitivist' tradition of Teutonic Saxonism. Carlyle's emphasis on ruggedness may be seen as part of an over-all harshening and toughening of his views. But, in emphasizing the individual heroism of a mythic leader like Odin, Carlyle was also building a bridge between the sturdy independence associated with the pre-Conquest period and the paternalistic feudalism of the high Middle Ages.

That bridge was to be found in hero worship. Hero worship, as he had already shown in the faithful Hagen story, is the very lifeblood of communal society. 'Hero worship', he wrote, was 'the grand modifying element in that ancient system of thought' that led to the transition from the 'perplexed jungle of Paganism' to modern society. Just as early medieval man was awestricken at the 'miraculous, stupendous and divine' workings of Nature; so, uncorrupted by unbelief or false belief, he demonstrated 'submissive admiration for the truly great' All Loyalty is akin to religious Faith', Carlyle argues, and 'loyalty proper, the life-breath of all society'. Hierarchy is really Heroarchy. A duke is a *dux*, or leader; a king is *kanning*, or wise, cunning and skilled. Reversing the traditional equation of the Teutonic or Norse with liberty, Carlyle hits his customary stride, declaring that 'Democracy, Liberty, Equality,' all are false. Earlier writers in the Teutonic tradition had seen the roots of English political freedom in the forests of Germany and Scandinavia. Carlyle acknowledges the importance of strength and valor. He is proud that, these early Odin-worshippers are his ancestors. Theirs is 'the creed of our fathers.' They are 'the men whose blood stills runs in our veins, whom doubtless we still resemble in many ways'.[21]

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[19] Thomas Carlyle, *Heroes and Hero Worship*, *The Works of Thomas Carlyle*, 16 vols (London: Chapman and Hall, 1896–99; repr. New York: AMS, 1980) V, 245–46.

[20] Carlyle, *Heroes*, 23.

[21] Carlyle, *Heroes*, 11–12, 16–17.

The linkage Carlyle sees is spiritual rather than political. It is the grandeur of the Norsemen's creation myth, their 'untamed thought, great, giant-like enormous' that later eras have tamed into the 'gianthood of the Shakespeares and the Goethes', Carlyle sees the Odin myth as confirming 'the divineness of nature' and the importance of valor. 'The first duty of man', Carlyle says, is still that of subduing *Fear*. We must get rid of Fear; we cannot act at all till then. For 'a man shall and must be valiant; he must march forward, and quit himself like a man'.[22]

As the Odin chapter shows, Carlyle's admiration for these Norse heroes, however he tempers his praise for them, marks him as a Teutonist but not as a liberal or constitutionalist. His Norse heroes are even more 'rugged' and 'wild' than Hereward. But they do not seek freedom for freedom's sake. Rather, Carlyle blends with his hard primitivism some of those values that marked the personal ethos of the neo-feudalists – their insistence on valor and loyalty. Carlyle underplays the elements of the Victorian interpretation of the chivalric code that emphasize altruism and self-sacrifice. His heroes are figures of might and power. Carlyle tries to argue that 'true valor' is different from ferocity; he notes that his Norse heroes were 'good forest-fellers', too. But he cannot really evade the consequences of his insistence on power. His Norsemen live and die by a pagan code that sees nobility in indomitable rugged energy rather than in sacrifice for others. Carlyle pays obligatory tribute to the Christian ethos in *Heroes and Hero Worship*; but the emotional and intellectual life of the book lies elsewhere – in a sternness and vigour, and in a firm sense of authority, hierarchy, and obedience. Much more of a political tract than the earlier *Nibelungen* essay, the message of *Heroes* is hierarchical and anti-democratic. Man must indeed love and serve the highest when he sees it; such obedience to greatness is the extent of his freedom and, indeed, his whole duty as man.

4.

Vigour turns to violence and even brutality in *The Early Kings of Norway* written in the closing years of Carlyle's life. As in the Odin chapter forty years before, Carlyle is again indebted to secondary sources and translations, most particularly here to Snorri Sturluson's *History of the Norse Kings,* which he largely retells. Carlyle also acknowledges F. C. Dahlmann's *Geschichte von Danemark* as a source, complaining that most histories of England still ignore the

[22] Carlyle, *Heroes*, 20, 29, 32.

strong 'thread of connection between English affairs and Norse'. Carlyle's overt aim is to rectify that alleged omission. But history is a secondary consideration here. Less directly than in *Shooting Niagara,* but with at least equal vehemence, the real subject is Carlyle's continuing anathematization of the Reform Bill of 1867 and the increasing democratization of English society that lay behind it. The primitive setting of Carlyle's narrative serves to dramatize his vehemence.

Carlyle's begins *Early Kings* by rejecting the value of folk parliaments, which had served as the historical justification for English parliamentary government at least as far back as the Stuart-Cromwell period. Where the early radical and ongoing Whig tradition had idealized the Anglo-Saxon *witena gemot* and its German precursors, Carlyle dismisses these 'Fylke *Things*' as 'little parish parliaments – and small combinations of these, which had gradually formed themselves' and were often 'reduced to the unhappy state of quarrel with each other'. Carlyle claims that Harald Haarfagr, earliest of the Norse kings, 'was the first to put an end to this state of things', and became 'memorable and profitable to his country by uniting it under one head and making a kingdom of it'. Harald was preceded and assisted in this task by his father who had 'already begun this rough but salutary process...which the good genius of the world, beneficent often enough under savage forms, and diligent at all times to diminish anarchy as the world's *worst* savagery, usually appoints in such cases, – *conquest,* hard fighting followed by wise guidance of the conquered'.[23]

The theme of force triumphing over chaos (and democracy) repeats itself throughout the work. Each of the reigns Carlyle describes either illustrates the achievement of order through forceful and often brutal means or the lapsing into entropy engendered by a weak monarchy. Danish King Gorm, for example, who lived at roughly the same time as Harald Haarfagr and who had similarly unified Denmark, is also praised. Himself an old man, Carlyle describes them both as 'remarkable old men, these two first kings; and possessed in fact of loyalties to Cosmos, that is to say of authentic virtues in the savage state, such as have been needed in all societies at their incipience in the world; a kind of "virtues" hugely in discredit at present, but not unlikely to be needed again, to the astonishment of careless persons before all is done'.[24]

The parallels to contemporary England – and the threat that present disorder may bring about a violent overthrow of the *status quo* – are

[23] Carlyle, *Heroes*, 203
[24] Carlyle, *Heroes*, 210

brought even closer to home in Carlyle's segment on the coming of the Danes to England. Carlyle the historian sees the period from the first Saxon king, Egbert, to the accession of Edward the Confessor as still shrouded in ignorance. Like Henry Hallam, who had written earlier in the century that 'many considerable portions of time, especially before the twelfth century, may justly be deemed so barren of events worthy of remembrance, that a single sentence of paragraph is often sufficient to give the character of entire generations and of long dynasties of obscure kings',[25] Carlyle knows that the historical record is incomplete. But he is reluctant to overlook a potential analogy, even when he acknowledges that the whole period from the ninth to eleventh century is profoundly in need of historical study. Especially for the reign of Edward the Confessor, Carlyle argues, we need scholars who can read both Anglo-Saxon and Icelandic to fill in our knowledge about those 'mysterious, continually invasive 'Danes' as they called them' so that they cease to be 'utterly dark, mythical, and hideous to us as they now are',[26]

What his reading of available historical material does show Carlyle is the devastating weakness that had taken place within Anglo-Saxon society during the two-century period of Danish incursions between Egbert and Edward. Carlyle echoes the argument of many of the Normanists in blaming the defeat of Harold on the deterioration of Anglo-Saxon society and the need for the cleansing and reordering of the body politic that William the Conqueror would bring in his wake. Carlyle, however, links Anglo-Saxon decadence to the degeneration of Victorian England. In the last half of the tenth century – meaning clearly the last half of the nineteenth-century – Carlyle writes with scarcely veiled parallelism: 'England excelled in anarchic stupidity, murderous devastation, utter misery, platitude, and sluggish contemptibility, all of the countries one has read of'. It was a wealthy country, too, benefiting from 'unexampled prosperity', as Carlyle sarcastically points out, and with cowardly generals whom Carlyle bitingly compares to current English war-secretaries.[27] Carlyle makes no assumption here, as others would do, of the superiority of one racial stock over another. His Normans, as he repeatedly makes plain, are simply Norsemen bouncing back from Normandy. But the need for a radical and possibly even violent destruction of the *status quo* was as imperative and inevitable then as it will be now, if England does not mend its ways.

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[25] Henry Hallam, *View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages* (London: John Murray, 1856), I, iii.
[26] *Early Kings*, 248.
[27] *Early Kings*, 249.

Carlyle reserves his strongest condemnation for Utilitarianism as a guiding principle. He describes the eleventh-century English as corrupted by pragmatism. In the interest of peace in our time, he charges, they sold even their English nuns to the Danes, trafficking in them 'on a kind of brutish or subter-brutish 'Greatest Happiness Principle'[...] and by a Joint Stock arrangement [that] far transcends all human speech or imagination, and awakens in one the momentary red-hot thought, The Danes have served ye right ye accursed'. Carlyle's subsequent strictures on the *Danegelt* as a form of income tax – the 'worst of all remedies, good for the day only' – are tepid by comparison.[28]

King Cnut (Canute), the Danish-born elected ruler of Anglo-Saxon England, resembles Harald Haarfagr and other hero figures. Carlyle describes him as

> a most nimble, sharp-striking, clear-thinking, prudent, and effective man, who regulated this dismembered and distracted England...like a real King. Had a Standing Army (*House Carles*), who were well paid, well-drilled and disciplined, capable of instantly quenching insurrection or breakage of the peace; and piously endeavoured (with signal earnestness, and even devoutness) [...] to do justice to all men, and to make all men rest satisfied with justice.

In praising Knut, however, Carlyle impales himself, on a contradiction. The savage fierceness that may be necessary for good government is antagonistic to the Christian mildness and pacifism that are intrinsic to the Western value system. Carlyle initially touches on this dilemma in his chapter on the Danish King Olaf Tryggveson, who becomes a convert to Christianity. Minimizing the contradictions in Tryggveson's promulgating Christianity by the sword, Carlyle simply presents his conversion as an epiphany: 'the great, wild, noble soul of fierce Olaf [opened] to this wonderful gospel of tidings from beyond the world, tidings which infinitely transcended all else he had ever heard of dreamt of'.[29]

Carlyle's portrait of Olaf Haraldsson, St. Olaf, is more complex – or, more accurately, more evasive and ambivalent in its treatment of the relationship between violence and godliness. A pious Christian convert, with steadfast trust in God and devout even in the face of adversity, Olaf is his Christian hero – a hero who suffers and dies on behalf of his people, a hero in the altruistic mode of chivalric medievalism. But Olaf is also a hard primitive in the Teutonic tradition.

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[28] *Early Kings*, 250.
[29] *Early Kings*, 252, 231.

As a seafarer, he is something of a pirate or 'privateer,' and he is so severe in his elimination of heathen practices that even Carlyle cannot say whether he is simply administering 'his passion and whims' or the eternal will of God Almighty. Carlyle praises Olaf's long march to Norway as showing

> a kind of pathetic grandeur, simplicity and rude nobleness; something Epic or Homeric...with all the sincerity, rugged truth to nature, and much more of piety, devoutness, reverence for what is forever High in this Universe than meets us in those old Greek Ballad-Mongers.

Casting the final balance, Carlyle concludes by ignoring the flaws and contradictions in Olaf's character: 'I have seldom met with better stuff to make a Saint of, or a true World-Hero in all good senses.'[30]

Early Kings of Norway constitutes Carlyle's final vision, both of the origins of society and the impossibility of democracy. Although he uses the raw materials of Saxonism and Teutonism, he draws from them not the lessons of freedom but those of authority, and even political compulsion. Both politically and philosophically, Carlyle drives toward order. For him the stirring deeds, great acts of violence, combats and compulsions he describes are but the 'poor Norse theatre' in which the eternal transition

> of human Chaos into something of an articulate Cosmos' is enacted. The story of the Norse kings is the story of the 'wild and strange birth-pangs of Human Society [...] without something similar (little as men expect such now) no Cosmos of human society was ever got into existence, nor ever can again be.[31]

His epilog is harsh and bleak:

> The History of these Haarfagrs has awakened in me many thoughts of Despotism and Democracy, arbitrary government by one, and self-government (which means no government, or anarchy) by all; of Dictatorship with many faults, and Universal Suffrage with little possibility of any virtue. For the contrast between Olaf Tryggveson and a Universal-Suffrage Parliament or an 'Imperial' Copper Captain has, in these nine centuries, grown very great.[32]

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[30] *Early Kings*, 261, 280, 283–84.
[31] *Early Kings*, 308.
[32] *Early Kings*, 307–08.

5.

Placed in the context of Carlyle's Norse medievalism, *Past and Present* (1845) would seem to belong to another tradition. The society described in Jocelin de Brakelond's *Chronicle* belongs to the post-Norman period. 'Wilhelmus Conquestor', as Carlyle here terms him, has subdued England, and the 'scanty sulky Norse-bred population' still living in the burned-out region north of the Humber believe that 'their history has probably as good as *ended*'.[33] And they are right. Traditional Norse social organization has been suppressed, and a far more complex feudal society has taken its place. King Henry II sits on his throne, surrounded by a hierarchy of earls, bishops, and dignitaries in rich costume. The power of the court and the power of the church, between them, create a living tissue of government, presided over by 'Monachism, Feudalism...and a real King Plantagenet'.[34] In contrast to the formative world of Odin, the *Nibelungen Lied, or Early Kings,* Carlyle deals here with a fully formed society, one with an elaborated governmental organization and a parallel set of religious structures. Norman law and Norman customs prevail.

In passages that serve as a *locus classicus* for Tory medievalism, Carlyle makes plain the superiority of feudalism at the height of its organic development, as opposed to the torpor of contemporary England, ruled solely by pocketbook considerations:

> A Feudal Aristocracy is still alive, in the prime of life; superintending the cultivation of the land, and less consciously the distribution of the produce of the land, the adjustment of the quarrels of the land; judging, soldiering, adjusting, everywhere governing the people,– that even a Gurth, born thrall of Cedric, lacks not his due parings of the pigs he tends.[35]

Carlyle, it is true, closes that paragraph by twisting the sword a different way. He points out that then as now, it was game-preserving – the unjustified and unearned privileges of the aristocracy – that drove Robin Hood, Will Scarlet and their band to seek refuge in the greenwood in 'some universal suffrage manner'. Over-all, however, the comparison goes only one way. The feudal period possessed 'depth and opulence of true social vitality'. The current era reveals

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[33] Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present*, The Works of Thomas Carlyle, 16 vols (London: Chapman and Hall, 1896–99; repr. New York: AMS, 1980) X, 66.

[34] *Past and Present*, 129.

[35] *Past and Present*, 65.

only 'confirmed Valethood' and 'the physiognomy of a world now verging toward dissolution'.[36]

Despite the dominance of the Abbot Samson chapters, however, it is a mistake to see Carlyle as endorsing only the post-Norman period. Carlyle brackets his story of Abbot Samson with the narrative of the life, death, and exhumation of St. Edmund, thereby carrying his narrative back to the ninth century – the same period he would later cover in *Early Kings*. Indeed, the Danes figure mightily here, always in a negative context, however. They are forces of disorder, as Carlyle describes them: 'Heathen Physical Force Ultra-Chartists,' who invaded England with their own 'five-points', or rather with their five-and-twenty thousand *points* and edges, too, of pikes namely and battle axes [...] proposing mere Heathenism, confiscation, spoliation...fire and sword.' Perhaps even worse, Carlyle argues tongue-in-cheek, they were not Chartists at all, but 'Ultra-Tories, demanding to reap where they had not sown and live in this world without working, though all the world should starve for it'.[37]

Although *Past and Present* is very different from *Early Kings* in its rendering of the Danish invasions, Carlyle can still find a hero in this pre-Conquest period. His descriptions of Landlord Edmund – St. Edmund, as he would become – borrow from the iconography of the Saxonists. Edmund's life is a rugged one: 'The landlord Edmund did go about in leather shoes, with *femoralia* and bodycoat of some sort upon him, and daily had his breakfast to procure.'[38] He was a good husbandman and a good landlord to his tenants. A faithful Christian and a figure of self-sacrifice, he dies under torture by the Danes fighting to protect his people. But the violence is imposed upon him. St. Edmund meets war with war, but he does not initiate battle.

The St. Edmund story serves a twofold purpose for Carlyle's narrative. It introduces the concept of an age of faith, and it sets up the medieval-modern contrast even within the pre-feudal period. The St. Edmund chapter is full of gibes against game-preserving, the Corn Laws, and a self-serving aristocracy that thinks it can do what it likes with its own. Even more than that, it provides a solution to the problem of harmonizing might with right. By selecting St. Edmund as a hero and by further selecting the facts of his life to emphasize his benevolence and his martyrdom, Carlyle avoids having to cope with the dilemma of reconciling violence with righteousness. John Greenway's *The Golden Horns: Mythic Imagination and the Nordic Past* shows how important such a dilemma was to the medievalism of

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[36] *Past and Present*, p. 87

[37] *Past and Present*, 54.

[38] *Past and Present*, 52.

the north. As Greenway points out, Teutonic enthusiasts needed to resolve the conflict between their professed Christian ethos and the undeniable brutality of the people they idealized. The Viking was, at best, a limited model for a supposedly peaceful society. For that reason, the figure of the Nordic freeman farmer, or *odalbonde*, also became part of the northern myth. 'Certainly', Greenway writes, 'the man of the soil was more congenial to the eighteenth-century than the barbaric Viking conqueror'.[39] Consciously or unconsciously, Scott had adapted the icon of the *odalbonde* in his portrait of Cedric the Saxon. Similarly, it is the landlord rather than the warrior that Carlyle uses for his Anglo-Saxon hero in *Past and Present.*

Nevertheless, Carlyle does not wholly escape the dilemma of reconciling right with might that would intensify in the savage world of *Early Kings.* He still describes the Middle Ages – pre- or post-Conquest – as the 'old barbarous ages'. But he mutes their barbarity. *Past and Present* shows only limited use of the recurrent words and phrases, such as *rude, wild, savage* that signal, as in the three Norse works, the presence of a violent civilization. Twelfth-century England may still largely be covered with dark forest; but it is only north of the Humber that 'wild fowl scream' and 'wild cattle roam in those ancient solitudes', Rather than emphasize the hard primitivism predominant in *Early Kings*, Carlyle evades some of the implications of his subject by recourse to the language of 'soft primitivism' and tempers his harsh portrayals with ambiguous and often contradictory imagery. Thus, Jocelin, his narrator, is 'simple hearted', 'a child', 'ingenuous', and 'innocent'. Jocelin's language in the *Chronicle* – much like Carlyle's description of the *Nibelungen* poet – is simple and 'limpid'. Similarly, the 'great antique heart' of the feudal period, as exemplified in Abbot Samson, is 'like a child's in its simplicity', although like a 'man's in its earnest solemnity and depth!'[40]

Samson himself, however, reveals the uncomfortable duality that Carlyle must face here and elsewhere in portraying a character who imposes order. Sturdy and 'stout-made', Samson is hairy, with 'bushy eyebrows' and a 'copious ruddy beard'. His face is 'massive', and he has a 'very eminent nose'. Disguising himself as a Scotchman during his trip to Rome, Samson convincingly strides along clad in the garments of that northern race, brandishing his staff and uttering threats. 'There is a terrible anger in him', and he is said to 'rage like a wolf'. But Carlyle also describes him as having 'a mild grave face[...][and] a sorrowful pity'. Adding to the pacific elements in

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[39] John L. Greenway, *The Golden Horns: Mythic Imagination and the Nordic Past* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1977), p. 92.

[40] *Past and Present*, 66, 41–42, 116.

Samson's nature, Carlyle picks up from Jocelin that the Abbot's favorite foods were 'sweet milk, honey, and other naturally sweet kinds of food'.[41]

Carlyle's solution to the problem of reconciling harshness with Christian virtue is to see Samson's behaviour as sternly under self-control and suited to the situation he must face. 'He tempers his medicine to the malady, now hot, now cool; prudent though fiery.' Care for his people and his responsibility wear him down. He had a 'sore time of it', Carlyle tells us; his beard and hair grew gray and his 'body visibly emaciated'. Indeed, his hair, Jocelin tells us, grew 'wholly white as snow', even as his eyes gleamed with 'sorrow and pity' and 'the heart within him remains unconquered'.[42] Like the traditional figures of chivalric medievalism, Samson is a figure of self-sacrifice; but he embodies two worlds since he is also the violent 'hard primitive' of Carlyle's Norse vision.

Past and Present is the only one of the four works in which all the elements of Carlyle's vision are actively forced into equilibrium. Dealing with both the pre-Conquest and post-Conquest period, the book presents two very different societies. Carlyle's Anglo-Saxon world is seemingly subject only to local authority although under constant attack from the external forces of savagery. It shares the localism and preference for rural life of the Saxonists,[43] but it shares neither their egalitarianism nor their concern for social justice. Carlyle's famous comment on Gurth, as has been noted, was that he lacked not the 'due parings of the pigs he tends'. Security in an ordered society rather than freedom from his iron collar is all Carlyle thinks that Gurth needs. Passionately, fiercely angry at the despoliation of the poor and the pain and suffering he has observed, Carlyle superimposes his own neo-feudalist views on the traditional raw materials of Saxonist libertarianism.

Carlyle does, however, retain one crucial element of traditional liberalism: its belief in the right of free men to *choose* their leaders. In the Abbot Samson story, the centre of government is no longer local, as the references to King Henry confirm; nor is the church local or even wholly English, as shown in the chapters on Samson's dealing with Rome. But the main character is still a sturdy Saxon, son of a poor Norfolk family, who must do battle with indolence, inaction, corruption, and insubordination. His methods are stern and rigourous,

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[41] *Past and Present*, 69, 92, 97.

[42] *Past and Present*, 101, 112.

[43] Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians, and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838–1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 59.

and there is no question that, at least within St. Edmund's monastery, the Abbot Samson is the arch-paternalist ruler of all. But he is an *elected* hero. Like the sixteenth-and seventeenth-century Anglo-Saxonists, Carlyle finds the source of authority in the voluntary selection of a leader – the same idea he had promulgated in *Heroes and Hero Worship.* Ballot boxes and the mechanical electoral methods of a mechanical society cannot elect anyone but Bobissumus, the epitome of an inadequate era's own inadequacies. But Abbot Samson's confreres knew how to elect a leader because they lived in an organic society that acknowledged the spiritual dimension. In an age of unbelief, Victorian society cannot select a leader. Democracy is the failed substitute for heroism – a destructive philosophy, Carlyle believes, that will itself have to be destroyed. Still adumbrated with some moderation and modulations in *Past and Present,* the damnation of democracy is the theme to which Carlyle would revert – bitterly and pitilessly – in *Early Kings.*

6.

Victorian medievalism, like medievalism in general, embodies a fluctuating dynamic between the actualities of medieval history and the requirements of contemporary ideology and between the discovery and reevaluation of medieval artifacts and their redaction into literature and the arts. As the early history of medievalism shows, the Middle Ages had barely come to an end – had not even been named as a period – before its laws and writings were being mined for precedents and values relevant to the present. The evolution of medievalism is reciprocal with the rise of antiquarianism, philology, historiography, paleography, and art history. The researches of scholars in these and other fields created a knowledge base about the Middle Ages that both shaped and was shaped by the needs of the present to validate its prevailing political and personal ideals.

Carlyle saw history as a hall of mirrors and was remarkably careful in his works to cite his sources. His strategies in using history and source materials were complex. His citations of his sources could corroborate his information, could be used to distance himself from the facts or events he was reporting, or could be used to portray the very age of which he wrote. All three strategies are used in his presentation of Jocelin's history: it validates his Abbot Samson narrative; it allows him to distance himself when he chooses from Jocelin's simplicity and naïveté; and it is part of his own interpretation of the Middle Ages as a period of both credulity and true religious faith.

Carlyle's dualism reveal itself in other ways as well. He is the lord of counterpositions, taking what he needs from the usually liberal Saxon-Teutonic-Norse tradition and adapting it to a neo-feudalist ethos that emphasizes hierarchy and paternalism rather than independence and egalitarianism. Even within the neo-feudalist tradition, however, Carlyle is atypical. A Tory radical such as Disraeli could argue in a passage justifying the post-Conquest distribution of land and wealth that 'the tenure of all property...[is] the performance of duties.'[44] Carlyle's hereditary Landlord Edmund illustrates this principle, but his Abbot Samson, a common man from Norfolk, as Carlyle often reminds the reader, is elected to his post – a Saxonist rather than a Normanist tenet. In *Past and Present*, at least, much as he decries democracy, Carlyle understands the impact of the new industrialization of England, the recentering of power from the land to the mill, and the needed vitality of the career open to the talents.

Less easy for Carlyle to resolve is the tension between the fundamentally Christian personal ethos of the neo-feudalists, with its emphasis on chivalric and altruistic behaviour, and the rough-hewn and rugged personal vitalism emphasized by the Teutonists. One virtue common to both value systems is truthfulness. Carlyle emphasizes the integrity and authenticity of all his heroes. But it is only in *Past and Present* that Carlyle fully sustains the balance between heroic action and chivalric altruism. St. Edmund and Abbot Samson die or grow old and ill in the service of the people. The early kings of Norway that Carlyle describes – his Haarfagrs, Tryggvesons, and Olafs – embody the principle that might makes right. But they do so with a savagery and a ruthlessness that remind us that the extremes of Teutonism ended in fascism in the twentieth century, just as the extremes of neo-feudalism ironically culminated in the welfare state. The evolution of Carlyle's thought shows a continuing awareness of social ills developing over time into a determination to overcome them by dictatorial power if necessary. As his own writings illustrate, nineteenth-century medievalism contains no deeper paradox than the ways in which it nourished seeds both of democratic renewal and totalitarian destructiveness.

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[44] Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, *Selected Speeches of the Late Right Honourable, the Earl of Beaconsfield*, ed. by T. E. Kebbel (London, 1882), I, 50.

MEDIEVAL IMAGES: JOSEPH VIKTOR VON SCHEFFEL'S NOVEL *EKKEHARD* AND ST. GALL

WERNER WUNDERLICH[1]

NO OTHER HISTORICAL NOVEL of the nineteenth century can compare in popularity with Scheffel's *Ekkehard* and no other literary work of the modern period has been more instrumental in making St. Gall and its monastery so well known.

'Buch Ekkehard! – In deinen Klängen
Rauscht wie der jungen Eiche Saft
Gesund und voll das Frühlingsdrängen
Der starken, deutschen Männerkraft.
O, möcht in diesem Quell genesen
Auch unsre greisenhafte Zeit,
Von jener Tage starkem Wesen
Gewappnet und emporgeweiht.'

[Book Ekkehard! Through the strains of your words, the spring-like impulses of strong, German manliness pulsate with vigor and vivacity like the sap of the young oak. Ah, may our own tired and weary age take solace at this source, be fortified and ennobled by the vigorous essence of those days.]

The poem was written by the Swiss Jakob Christoph Heer author of such rustic Alpine sagas as *An heiligen Wassern* ('At holy waters') or *König der Bernina* ('King of the Bernina').[2] In a somewhat pretentious style, Heer recommends to his contemporaries (in the *Scheffel-Jahrbuch* for the year 1890) the novel *Ekkehard*, written by Joseph Viktor von Scheffel, as a form of rejuvenating therapy. This does not mean, however, that all of Heer's fellow countrymen had the same lavish and often unrestrained praise for the healing, Teutonic 'essence' of Scheffel's novel; it was most certainly not the case in St. Gall, where a distinctly dissonant chord can be discerned in response to those 'pulsating strains' of the novel.[3]

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[1] I would like to thank Winder McConnell (University of California-Davis) who translated this essay for me from German into English.

[2] Louis P. Betz, *Jos. Victor v. Scheffel. Die Schweiz in seinem Leben und Dichten. Zur Einweihung des Scheffel-Denkmals beim Wildkirchli* (Zurich: Alpstein–Club, 1902), pp. 14–15.

[3] See Werner Wunderlich, '"Es war eine vergnügliche Zeit..." Scheffels Ekkehard und St. Gallen', *Bodensee Hefte* 43 (1992) (No. 12), 44–49.

The veneration of Scheffel in the city of Gallus

On April 13, 1886, an obituary which appeared in the local St. Gall newspaper attributed to the author, who had died on April 9, 'level-headedness, fresh poetical material, clarity, and vividness of expression,' as well as an 'agreeable sense of humor,' and it was 'a matter of honor for St. Gall' to pay him 'a tribute of thanks'.[4] Just one year later, in 1887, the city erected a memorial on Berneck Hill on the southern outskirts of St. Gall with the inscription 'to the author of *Ekkehard*.' In addition, the name of the road up to this memorial is called the 'Scheffelsteinweg.' There was an inn in the Twenties which had on its sign-board the name Scheffel (who had gained something of a reputation for his imbibing). The 'Scheffelstraße' can still be found on the eastern outskirts of the Old City. There are also other streets as well as buildings which have been named after characters to be found in Scheffel's novel. Ekkehard and Hadwig, for example, each have a street named after them. Since 1922, Ekkehard has also been the patron saint of one of St. Gall's hotels. In the year 1907, a new school in the Notkerstraße, built in the fashion of Art Nouveau (in fact, the most attractive school house in the municipality), was dedicated to Hadwig, Ekkehard's aristocratic pupil. This old school building, called the Hadwig, houses the Pedagogical University.[5] Finally, a house built in Art Nouveau style in the Zwinglistraße bears the name of the shepherd boy, Audifax, who also appears in Scheffel's novel. There is thus both public and official testimony to the extent to which this author and his work are venerated by the people of St. Gall, a veneration which underscores a sense of their city's history and the pride taken in its traditions. From the second half of the nineteenth century on, Scheffel and his novel, *Ekkehard*, spread the fame of St. Gall and the image of its great cultural past in an unparalleled way far and wide throughout German-speaking Europe.

This may have prompted the well-known St. Gall Professor of History and Literature, Georg Thürer, to refer, on the occasion of the centennial of Scheffel's death in 1986, to the 'worthy novel which had played such a significant role among the population in the process of integrating the St. Gall monastery into European cultural circles' (*St. Galler Tagblatt*, 31 December 1986). Moreover, in 1989, during a television broadcast depicting the filming of the novel, the *St. Galler Tagblatt* recalled the conciliatory effect that *Ekkehard* had had in bringing the Reformation city and the surrounding Catholic towns

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[4] *Tagblatt der Stadt St. Gallen*, 13 April 1886. Henceforth cited as *Tagblatt*.

[5] See *Das Hochschulgebäude Hadwig. Ort des Lernens, Lehrens und Forschens*, ed. by Erwin Stickel, Kollegium, 5 (St. Gall: UVK, 1995).

together into one municipality (*St. Galler Tagblatt*, 14 April 1989). It would be virtually impossible to determine whether Scheffel's novel actually had any effect on community politics in St. Gall in 1918, or, for that matter, if it ever had any other cultural or political influence. We can, however, ascertain from these and other testimonies to its reception that Scheffel's *Ekkehard*, from the outset and certainly not just in St. Gall, was not discussed very much as a work of literature. It was rather seen as some sort of vague cult object associated with a tradition that celebrated itself, a tradition which is reflected in this literary monument.

There still exists, however, some rather touching evidence of the popularity of *Ekkehard* in one of the places portrayed therein. This testimony exudes a deep gratitude for the novel's alleged timelessness and, as such, also its relevance for contemporary life. The bourgeois reading public, particularly female readers, greatly enjoyed the love story between the duchess and the young monk. In the same way the so-called yellow press of today allows its female readers to participate in the joy and distress of the affairs of high society, situations involving love and suffering in this historical novel enticed readers to identify with both the pain and joy of the unhappy hero. The latter is essentially removed from his fictional context and placed squarely within the actual experiential horizon of the readers. The mature and sophisticated women of St. Gall were delighted with the portrayal of Scheffel's hero as a 'sweet,' if awkward, fellow, and shortly before the centennial of the novel's publication they proclaimed in most gracious terms the practical connection it had to their own image of men and the reason for the novel's popularity among female readers: 'The reason that we women, whether or not we come from St. Gall, will always adore young Ekkehard as Scheffel has portrayed him is because we feel sorry for him, and because he understands so little about the essence of women!'[6]

This type of naive appropriation can also be found within the frame-work of cultural events and is reflected in examples from the literary and musical reception of the work. Hugo Röhr, Musical Director of the Munich Court Orchestra, had composed an *Ekkehard* opera.[7] It premiered in Munich and a delegation of the Municipal Choir 'Frohsinn'[8] expressly recommended that it be performed in St.

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[6] Hanna Willi, 'Auf den Spuren Ekkehards', *Ex Libris*, 9.7 (1954), 14.

[7] See Hugo Riemann, *Musik Lexikon, Personenteil L – Z* (Mainz: Schotts Söhne, 1961), p. 525.

[8] Johannes Proelss, 'Protokoll der Sitzung vom 7. März 1901', *Kommissions-Protokoll, 1. August 96 – 13. Aug. 1902*. [Copy in the Kantonsbibliothek Vadiana St. Gall]. Henceforth cited as 'Protocol',

Gall. On December 1, 1901, the Choir performed Röhr's opera *Ekkehard* in the St. Laurenz Church and the production appears to have been greeted with enthusiasm by the people of St. Gall. During the subsequent banquet celebrations in the Schützengarten Inn, a short festival play written by a bank director called Grütter specifically for this occasion paid homage 'to the spirit of Scheffel and the composer who was in attendance'.[9] The libretto by W. Schulte vom Brühl concentrates entirely on the love story in Scheffel's novel and intensifies the latter's rather saccharine moral of self-denial. This literary construction attempts to depict love as something to be subordinated to bourgeois norms of behavior such as self-restraint, control of the emotions, or sexual denial in the interest of patriotic duty and the conventions of society. This musical work is inadvertently on a par with Scheffel's own aesthetic talents, for it is nothing more than an emulation of a real artistic predecessor. Röhr's composition naively imitates the dramatic techniques of Richard Wagner's medieval operas and takes its cue from either Giaccomo Meyerbeer or Pietro Mascagni.

Historical criticism of Ekkehard

Ekkehard has, however, also received some 'bad grades' in St. Gall. This was the case, for example, when the 'reality' of the plot or the image of history that was presented deviated from the townspeoples' view of history and concept of reality, or even went against the town's own traditional values. It is a fate which, to be sure, Scheffel's novel shares with every work of literature which imparts history within a fictional framework. Scheffel himself preferred to label his book

> a strictly historical novel, which, in a playful way, reflects the culture and the spiritual life of a long lost era. Moreover, if one were to strip away the psychological framework of the story, it could easily be included in a series of scholarly essays.[10]

Scheffel's self-assessment of his literary abilities and scholarly competency when it came to dealing with a story that he praised as an example of 'old German glory' were, however, not shared by

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[9] *Jahresberichte des Stadtsängerverein-Frohsinn St. Gallen umfassend den Zeitraum vom 1. Juli 1901 bis 30. Juni 1904* (St. Gall, 1905), p. 7. Henceforth cited as *Jahresberichte*.

[10] Scheffel to Wilhelm Meier-Ott in Zurich (Karlsruhe, 30 November 1854), *Joseph Victor von Scheffel. Ein Lebensbild in Briefen*, ed. by Willibald Klinke (Zurich: Verein Gute Schriften, 1952), p. 110. Henceforth cited as Klinke.

everyone in Switzerland. Based on his qualifications as the author of *Ekkehard*, Scheffel, in 1854, made a bid for the Chair in German literature at the Polytechnical University in Zurich,[11] but unfortunately, with no success.[12]

It is precisely from a historical – as well as from a psychological perspective – that justified criticism can be levelled against Scheffel's novel. With their stereotypical characteristics and mechanical behavior patterns, his literary figures are basically static types, by no means individual characters who are shaped by psychological portrayal. When it comes to dealing with historical facts and methodology, Scheffel occasionally tends to be rather lax with respect to any adherence to actual reality and the dictates of scholarship.

A long time after enthusiasm had waned for an emotional reveling in anything that had to do with 'old Germany,' the most strenuous objections were leveled against this so-called 'patriotic painting,' the way in which the novel was depicted in 1854 by Scheffel's mother.[13] Scheffel was also taken to task for individual aspects of his description of St. Gall's history. Certain spokesmen, who saw themselves as knights of the Grail charged with protecting the cultural heritage of St. Gall, pitched in with their criticism. In 1926, a junior high school teacher, Emil Schlumpf, whose hobby was historical research and who was an admirer of Wiborada, accused Scheffel of having been 'reckless with the sources,' and suggested that 'the author has dragged them through the dirt.' What could have occasioned such harsh words? The reason for the attack was to be found in the Wiborada episode, which represented for Schlumpf nothing less than 'a grave sin against cultural history'.[14] Wiborada, whose spoken name, Weiberrat, indicates that she was an adviser, became famous by virtue of the directions she gave to Abbot Engilbert II to take measures to safeguard the treasures of the monastery from the Hungarians.[15] Engilbert followed her advice, removed the books from the already famous library to the island monastery of Reichenau, and had the gold and silver instruments used in the liturgy brought to a fortress that had been hastily built at

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[11] Scheffel to Dr. Kern in Zurich, President of the Swiss School Commission (Karlsruhe, 2 December 1854), Klinke, pp. 110–12.

[12] See Alfred Ruhemann, *Joseph Viktor von Scheffel. Sein Leben und Dichten* (Stuttgart: Bonz & Co., 1887), and Joseph Stöckle, *Ich fahr' in die Welt. Joseph Victor von Scheffel, der Dichter des fröhlichen Wanderns und harmlosen Geniessens*, 2nd edn (Paderborn: Schöning, 1888), p. 58.

[13] Scheffel's mother to Schwanitz (Karlsruhe, 16 March 1854), Klinke, p. 107.

[14] E[mil]Schlumpf, 'Wiborada Vindicata oder Viktor v. Scheffels 'Wiborada' Reklusa im Lichte der Quellen', *Monat-Rosen* (1926) (No. 1/2), 3–12 (4).

[15] See Johannes Duft, 'Sankt Wiborada im Schrifttum eines Jahrtausends', in Duft's *Die Abtei St. Gallen* (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1991), II, 175–83.

Bernhardzell, about halfway to Lake Constance. Wiborada was martyred by a blow from a Hungarian ax in 926; in 1047, she became the first woman from the German-speaking cultural area to be canonized by Pope Clemens II (St. Wiborada Day: May 2), and was declared the patron saint of librarians.

The memory of Wiborada is alive and well even in present-day St. Gall, where she remains highly revered. Scheffel, however, has painted a rather unflattering image of this saint. She appears in his novel as a truly unsympathetic, ludicrous, and hysterical old hag, somewhat deranged, a greedy and irascible woman, who displays a notable urge to leave her cloistered existence and partake of the pleasures of this world. The film version goes even further and makes her into an ugly, haggard, repulsive, and simultaneously comic old woman, covered in vermin, who carries on in a delirious and obscene manner in her filthy cloister. Needless to say, there is absolutely nothing to substantiate this portrayal of Wiborada in the hagiographical sources and the chronicles. The latter attempt to make the saintly life and the martyr's death suffered by Wiborada as believable as possible. Furthermore, no evidence of such behavior can be found in the *Vita Wiboradae*,[16] authored between 960 and 970 presumably by Ekkehard I and later edited by Ekkehart IV, nor in the version that was completely revised about 1075 by Herimannus. Even the *Casus sancti Galli* contain nothing to support this image of Wiborada. The *vitae* of saints were based on religious feelings and convictions and the literary depiction of such figures was meant as a form of veneration and edification. They present martyrs as figures with whom one can identify, who, by sacrificing their own lives out of love of Christ, reciprocate the crucifixion. If there is ever any role to be found for comedy, the burlesque, in hagiographical sources, it is never at the expense of the saints, but only for the purpose of portraying devils, heathens, sinners or even the dull-witted as caricatures deserving of punishment. The monastic model of a saint as depicted in hagiography requires a renunciation of sexuality, property, homeland through a renunciation of this world and the striving for a life in God's image. The figure of the saint, whether male or female, embodies concepts such as asceticism, contemplation, conversion, and, as in the case of Wiborada, prophecy. Hagiography is less concerned with historical facts than with pious veneration. This is precisely the reason why the former librarian

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[16] 'Ekkeharti Vita S. Wiboradae', *Vitae Sanctae Wiboradae. Die ältesten Lebensbeschreibungen der heiligen Wiborada*, ed. by Walter Berschin, Mitteilungen zur Vaterländischen Geschichte, 51 (St. Gall: Historischer Verein des Kantons St. Gallen, 1983).

of the monastery, Johannes Duft, was so annoyed with Scheffel's portrayal:

> If Wiborada is unknown to many, the perception which others have of her is unfortunately quite false. Joseph Victor von Scheffel bears the responsibility for this through the manner in which he has distorted her inner mysticism and her female resolve in his *Ekkehard*. Wiborada's true essence, as the sources demonstrate, was pure and great.[17]

Scheffel, however, really has no interest whatsoever in remaining faithful to such sources. Even if he is not concerned with the sanctification of the martyr figure, one certainly does not have to suggest that he intended to show his disdain for her in a provocative manner. He is first and foremost interested in presenting a literary figure who can serve as a contrast to the pretty, clever, and jovial Greek woman Praxedis in Hadwig's entourage, one of those characters whom Hugo von Hofmannsthal praised as 'clearly and delicately defined figures'.[18] For this reason Scheffel projects the recluse, who, in actuality, had already been killed in 926 by the Hungarians, into the later time-frame of the novel and has her lifestyle, as we know it, appear against the backdrop of his own order- and hygiene-oriented perspective of the nineteenth century. This, in spite of tradition and without considering the hagiographical authenticity of his character that is extant in narratives. Here as elsewhere, Scheffel is not concerned, when describing religious customs or the spiritual conditions, with providing a historical understanding of monks or the concept of asceticism. That is evident from the description which he provides, quite at odds with the sources, as well as the obvious derision or a tendency to characterize in a quaintly belittling manner. Schlumpf is clearly less bothered by the contradiction between literary depiction and recorded history than by the incompatibility of Scheffel's portrayal of history with his own, which he likewise tends to project onto the saint with some naive pathos and unintended humor: 'People such as Wiborada were sown like seeds into the landscape of the tenth century, a landscape tilled with blood and tears, and the fruit of this seed was none other than medieval culture in its fullest blossom'.[19]

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[17] Johannes Duft, 'Die Märtyrerin Wiborada', in Duft's *Die Ungarn in St. Gallen. Mittelalterliche Quellen zur Geschichte des ungarischen Volkes in der Sanktgaller Stiftsbibliothek*, Bibliotheca Sangallensis, 1 (Zurich, Lindau, Constance: v. Ostheim, Thorbecke, 1957), pp. 26–35.

[18] Hugo von Hofmannsthal, '[Scheffels 'Ekkehard]', Hofmannsthal, *Gesammelte Werke in Einzelausgaben* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1955), IV, 507.

[19] Schlumpf, 11.

The St. Gall history teacher Wilhelm Ehrenzeller also criticized the novel in 1942 from his perspective of local patriotism: 'Scheffel's *Ekkehard* offers us a falsified impression of St. Gall's history; he turns strong medieval heroes and knights of God into "dainty" figures [...]'.[20] Scheffel does, in fact, allow 'dainty' figures to appear in his work because he has projected his notions of history and his artistically sublimated opinions onto the characters in the novel. But in view of the naively romantic image of how St. Gall appeared in the Middle Ages and in view of the totally uncritical perceptions of life in a monastery, the suspicion remains that, given their criteria for judgment, the critics in St. Gall could not have avoided also producing a distorted image of the historical Ekkehards. In his positive review of *Ekkehard*, Theodor Fontane had already voiced the mild criticism that 'at several points, Scheffel tends to romanticize more than I care to see'.[21]

The St. Gall critics are thus quite justified in accusing Scheffel of a rather questionable use of sources, even if this reproach is basically motivated by their dismay at the disdainful way in which Scheffel is alleged to have dealt with representatives from the most resplendent period of St. Gall's history. Moreover, if Scheffel had not been so ambitious as to attempt 'to forge a close bond' between historical writing and poetry, 'to have them united in a common purpose,' as well as to have his novel 'recognized as an equal partner with history,[22] it is quite possible that his critics in St. Gall would not have been so merciless with his *Ekkehard*. They might well have even aligned themselves with those people who maintained that Scheffel's equally imaginative as well as fantastic mixture of fiction and fact was evidence of his having been ordained with special inspiration: 'This union of research and poetry was formed from inner necessity'.[23]

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[20] Wilhelm Ehrenzeller, 'Wider Scheffel's *Ekkehard*', *St. Gallisches Jahrbuch* (1942), 140–43, (140).

[21] Theodor Fontane, 'Josef Viktor von Scheffels Ekkehard', Theodor Fontane, *Sämtliche Werke* (Munich: Nymphenburger, 1963), XXI, 252.

[22] Jospeh Victor von Scheffel, *Ekkehard*. With an Afterword by the author (Zurich: Dio-genes, 1985), p. 431. Henceforth cited in the text as *Ekkehard*.

[23] Michael Bernays, 'Rede auf Scheffel', Bernays, *Schriften zur Kritik und Litteraturgeschichte* (Leipzig: Göschen, 1899), III, 329–48.

Wandering poet and Prince of Poets

The greatest dilemma faced by Joseph Victor von Scheffel,[24] son of a senior government architect and a mother who made some dilettantish stabs at writing poetry, was that he always wanted to achieve more than he was capable of doing. He had had to study Law against his will, whereas he would have preferred to have devoted himself to the Fine Arts. In 1848, his political hopes for a bourgeois revolution had been shattered as had, in 1851, his private desire to marry his cousin Emma,[25] as well as, in 1854, his academic aspirations to pursue a university career. It is thus no surprise that Scheffel became discouraged and suffered from depressive melancholia. The public, on the other hand, only knew him as the composer of merry student drinking songs and lighthearted works with a nationalist bent. For the 'favorite poet of the new Germany' led the life of a wandering poet who knew how to hold his liquor, and who suggested a unity of life and work in Lieder collections such as *Gaudeamus* (1868).[26] From the time he was elevated to nobility in 1876, this sociable and innocuous entertainer was more than happy to enjoy the fame of being considered a 'prince of poets.' However, the few works he produced during this time – some travel reports and impressionistic lyric poetry – were hardly sufficient to justify his fame. His verse epic, *Der Trompeter von Säckingen*, had already appeared in 1854 and the novel *Ekkehard* in 1855, but subsequent to them Scheffel had not really published anything more worth mentioning. A translation of the Latin *Waltharilied* (1874) had already formed a section of his *Ekkehard*, a

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[24] Scheffel's first name is inconsistently spelled with either a 'c' or a 'k'. The most recent scholarship on Scheffel includes: Manfred Fuhrmann, 'Scheffels Erzählerwerk – Bildungsbeflissenheit, Deutschtümelei', *Allmende*, 1 (1981), 60–69; Hans-Otto Hügel, 'Joseph Viktor von Scheffel: Geselliger Unterhalter – Gefeierter Künstler', *Literatur im deutschen Südwesten*, ed. by Bernhard Zeller and Walter Scheffler (Stuttgart: Theiss, 1987), pp. 231–41; Manfred Lechner, 'Joseph Viktor von Scheffel. Eine Analyse seines Werkes und seines Publikums' (unpublished doctoral thesis, university of Munich, 1962); Günther Mahal, *Josef Viktor von Scheffel. Versuch einer Revision* (Karlsruhe: C. F. Müller, 1986); Rolf Selbmann, *Dichterberuf im bürgerlichen Zeitalter. Joseph Viktor von Scheffel und seine Zeit*, Beiträge zur neueren Literaturgeschichte, 58 (Heidelberg: Winter, 1982).

[25] Ernst Boerschel, *Josef Victor von Scheffel und Emma Heim. Eine Dichterliebe* (Berlin: E. Hofmann & Co., 1906), pp. 117–64.

[26] See Klar, *Joseph Victor Scheffel und seine Stellung in der deutschen Literatur* (Prague: Kosmach & Neugebauer, 1876); Johannes Proelss, *Scheffels Leben und Dichten* (Berlin: Freund & Jeckel, 1887), pp. 285–336; Anton Breitner, *Joseph Viktor von Scheffel und seine Literatur. Prodromos einer Scheffel-Bibliographie* (Bayreuth: Seligsberg, 1912).

copy of which he dedicated on September 27 to the renowned St. Gall historian, August Naef.[27] He was not able to keep the promise he had made in 1857 to the Grand Duke Karl-Alexander von Weimar to write a novel about the Wartburg, which had been revered as a national site of homage since the emergence of the student fraternity movement. His plan to write a long Nibelungen novel about the man he presumed was the author of the epic, Master Conrad,[28] did not mature beyond a few fragmentary drafts and by-products such as the collection of poems entitled *Frau Aventiure* (1863) or the novella *Juniperus*.[29] In considerable pain for the last fourteen years of his life, Scheffel passed away on April 9, 1886, at his home in Radolfzell on Lake Constance.

One cannot really say that his own life in any way reflected what he might have idealized in his work as the life of a poet. His creative endeavors are the product of an imitator, something of which Scheffel himself was painfully aware, as can be seen when he has the main protagonist of his *Der Trompeter von Säckingen* sigh: 'Alas, I am an imitator.' He was constantly looking for his own poetic expression; his efforts tend to betray this desire and are somewhat forced. 'The novel would have benefited from a simpler presentation rather than one which suffers from a forced old-fashionedness,' as one critical reviewer of Scheffel's *Ekkehard* remarked in the *Literarisches Centralblatt für Deutschland*.[30] His displeasure with contemporary politics and his belief that the age of the masses was unhealthy had caused Scheffel to seek refuge in the countryside and history, allowing him to become a nostalgic author of jovial poems and the literary representative of a post-romanticist historicism.

Scheffel was the author of popular works that were both historical and devotional in nature, a type of literature that was fashionable primarily in the second half of the nineteenth century. The belief in the binding character of universals had come to an end with Romanticism. A positivistic way of looking at the world and a striving for completeness sought a historical substitute and an ideological basis

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[27] Joseph Victor von Scheffel, and Alfred Holder, *Waltharius. Lateinisches Gedicht des 10. Jahrhunderts*. Amended in accordance with extant manuscripts and with German translation and explanations (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1874) [Copy in the Kantonsbibliothek Vadiana St. Gall, Catalog no. Qa 3732.]; Paul Willert, 'Deutsche Übersetzungen des Waltharilieds: Scheffel, Winterfeld, Althof' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Jena, 1940).

[28] See Werner Wunderlich, 'The invented Poet: Scheffel's literary Imagination of the Nibelungenlied-Author', *Poetica*, 39/40 (1994), 247–58.

[29] See Werner Wunderlich, 'Wer war der Greis, den Worms solch Lied gelehrt? Der erfundene Dichter. Joseph Viktor von Scheffels Version vom Autor des Nibelungenliedes', *Euphorion*, 89.3 (1995), 239–70.

[30] *Literarisches Centralblatt für Deutschland*, 19 January 1856, p. 44.

in individual aspects of the world and history. These were to be awakened to a life that could be reconstructed in poetic form through the works of Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl, Gustav Freytag, Felix Dahn, Emmanuel Geibel or Wilhelm Hauff. Their novels underscored an attitude which hoped to find its identity in a sympathetic participation in the glorious epochs and splendid cultural achievements of a transfigured past.[31]

The reception of a bestseller

Scheffel's fame rests even today primarily on the successful novel about the monastic brother Ekkehard of St. Gall.[32] That was not something which could have been predicted. After all, pressure had been exerted on the editors of the literary magazine, which had initially published the work in installments, to have its publication blocked. In 1855, the novel appeared in book form in the remarkably high edition of 10,000 copies as the first volume in the second set of the subscription series of the 'Deutsche Bibliothek' ('German Library') published by Meidinger & Co. in Frankfurt am Main. Its lagging sales were apparently largely responsible for the bankruptcy of the firm. Finally, in 1862, Otto Janke in Berlin risked publishing a second edition, which was followed by another five through 1869. In 1870, the copyright for the work was turned over to Metzler Verlag in Stuttgart, and from there to Bonz & Co., which, as a result of the considerable success in sales that had been registered in the meantime, even established its own Scheffel Press. *Ekkehard* had received effusive reviews in the wake of the recent outburst of enthusiasm for former times of national glory occasioned by the founding of the (Second) Reich in 1871. These helped to make it one of the most widely read novels of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. In Scheffel's own lifetime his novel appeared in eighty-six editions, and by 1916 this had risen to 284.[33] They often included rather wretched and tasteless illustrations.[34] After World War I, an annotated, critical Scheffel edition

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[31] Hugo Aust, *Der historische Roman*, Sammlung Metzler, 278 (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 1994), pp. 93ff.

[32] Günther Mahal, *Josef Viktor von Scheffel. Versuch einer Revision* (Karlsruhe: C. F. Müller, 1986), p. 89.

[33] Friedrich Panzer, *Scheffels Werke* (Leipzig and Berlin: Bibliographisches Institut, [1919]), III, 18.

[34] See, for example, J[ulius] Benczur and others, *Scheffels Ekkehard in Bildern*. Mit begleitendem Text von Ludwig Fulda und Textillustrationen von Otto Seitz (Munich: Verlagsanstalt für Kunst und Wissenschaft, 1886); F. V. von Scheffel, *Ekkehard*. Eine

by the renowned Heidelberg medievalist and philologist Friedrich Panzer appeared on the market. Once the copyright had expired, one or two editions appeared each year into the 1940s.

Evidence of the popularity and the cultural influence enjoyed by Scheffel's novel towards the end of the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century is provided not least of all by its positive reception, as well as the aforementioned setting to music of the 'dramatic poem' by Hugo Röhr. In 1902, the composer Franz Schreker produced the symphony *Ekkehard*,[35] the first published edition of which appeared in Vienna in 1903. The composer and conductor, Johann Joseph Abert,[36] who had close connections with the circle of Swabian poets whose leaders included Justus Kerner, Eduard Mörike, and Ludwig Uhland, had already, in 1862, taken the medieval work *König Enzio* and made it into an opera (revised in 1875 under the title *Enzio von Hohenstaufen*). He turned to Scheffel's novel in 1877 and produced it on the stage as a neo-romantic music drama. As would later be the case with the aforementioned opera by Röhr, Abert's music also takes as its starting point Meyerbeer's opulent historical operas and incorporates elements from Richard Wagner's music dramas. The composition is credited with displaying 'perfect handiwork in the areas of structure of movement and orchestration',[37] while the libretto, a collective piece of work by the Cotta publisher Adolf Kröner, the author Wilhelm Hertz and the dragoon cavalry captain Carl Hecker, is a rather trivial composition consisting of hackneyed rhymes. The five-act play premiered on October 11, 1878 in the Royal Opera House in Berlin. The plot concentrates entirely on the love story: Ekkehard falls in love with Hadwig at first sight and shows his devotion in an air which reminds us of Tamino's 'portrait-aria' from *The Magic Flute*:

'Wer ist die Fremde, deren hohes Bild Gleich einem Wunder mir das Auge blendet? Wie eine Heil'ge ist sie schön und mild,	[Who is this stranger, whose fair image dazzles my eyes like some miracle? She is lovely and gentle

Geschichte aus dem 10. Jahrhundert. Mit Bildern von [Arthur] Grunenberg (Berlin: W. Borngräber, [1917]).

[35] See Gösta Neuwirt, 'Schreker', Die Musik in Geschiche und Gegenwart. Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik (Kassel and Basel: Bärenreiter, 1985), XII, 73–76, and Franz Schreker, Ekkehard. Symphonische Ouvertüre nach dem gleichnamigen Roman von V. v. Scheffel für großes Orchester und Orgel (ad libitum). Opus 12 (Miami, FL: Kalmus, 1985).

[36] Friedrich Blume, 'Abert', *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik* (Kassel and Berlin: Bärenreiter, 1949–51), I, 38–39.

[37] Kurt Honolka, 'Eine ausgrabenswerte Oper: 'Ekkehard' von Johann Joseph Abert', *Mitteilungsblatt der Johann-Joseph-Abert-Gesellschaft* (Stuttgart: [n.p.], 1995), p. 7.

Die gnadenreich der Himmel niedersendet!'[38]	like a saint, whom heaven has so graciously bestowed from above!]

Ekkehard seduces Hadwig and is consequently expelled from the monastery and imprisoned. He is freed by Praxedis, who has been transformed into a Valkyrie. As penance, Ekkehard throws himself into battle against the Huns and is fatally wounded. 'A poisoned Hun arrow suddenly penetrated his helmet'.[39] In his dying breath, Ekkehard confesses his transgression and asks for God's forgiveness so that he might be released from his sins and allowed to enter heaven:

'Vergib, wenn irdisches Begehren Sich einst in meiner Brust entfacht.'[40]	[Forgive me, if once earthly desire arose in my breast.]

The verses and rhymes of the libretto are of the most primitive type. Linguistic pathos and a rather tasteless style produce a work of grandiloquent sentimentality. The acts and individual scenes are characterized by a simple pattern of entrances and exits. The characters themselves are only there to deliver bombastic confessions and are devoid of any sort of recognizable and psychologically founded development. The fact that Ekkehard does penance for his sinful love of Hadwig by seeking death in battle is a common literary motif and a casual cliché to be found in opera, something which Abert applies with basically no motivation to Scheffel's story.

In the year 1900 an anonymous author using the pseudonym 'Vittore Pisano' wrote a play entitled *Die Brüder von Sankt Gallen,* which was very freely adapted from Scheffel. Ekkehard and Hadwig make eyes at each other in blank verse; nonetheless, the pious man of God ultimately rejects Hadwig. Even her offer (to elevate him to nobility by taking him as her husband) cannot sway him: 'Off with your habit! I want to place ermine around your strong shoulders'.[41] At this point the domineering lady becomes a raging fury and ultimately wishes for the death of the monk, who has found peace in his deliverance: 'May he be denied air, and the sun of God [...]'.[42] She throws herself in frustration and desperation upon her bed. However, of all these adaptations and new productions the only one to achieve some modest measure of success was Abert's opera.

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[38] [Abert, J. J., comp.]. *Ekkehard. Opera in five acts.* Freely adapted from J. V. v. Scheffel's novel. Music by J. J. Abert (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1878), I, 3, 9.

[39] Abert, V, 1, 37.

[40] Abert, V, 3, 39,

[41] Vittore Pisano, Pisano, *Die Brüder von St. Gallen.* Play in four acts adapted from Scheffel (Vienna: Wiener Verlag, 1906), p. 128.

[42] Pisano, p. 130.

It was also principally the success of *Ekkehard* which led to the founding, in 1890, of a literary society devoted to promoting Scheffel the author and the cultivation of his work.[43] With its 4000 members, the *Scheffel Society* soon became one of the largest literary associations in Germany. Since its establishment, the organization has awarded the *Scheffel Prize* to the High Schools in southwest Germany for the best graduate in each school in the subject of German. The Yearbooks of the Society have contained since 1890 articles about Scheffel and have published hitherto unknown materials from Scheffel's literary estate. The Society currently has its center in Scheffel's birthplace, Karlsruhe, and is called the *Literarische Gesellschaft (Scheffelbund)*. With its approximately 5000 members, it is dedicated to promoting the culture of the Upper Rhine, is the site of the *Oberrheinisches Dichtermuseum*, and, with the *Scheffel-Archiv*, is responsible for managing the literary estate of the author of *Ekkehard*, as well as of other Upper Rhenish writers.[44]

Up to the middle of the twentieth century, Scheffel's novel remained one of the most popular books of the educated bourgeoisie. After that, *Ekkehard* was almost completely forgotten, even in St. Gall. It was only with the advent of the 'Middle Ages Renaissance' in literature and film that the novel was again 'discovered' and, in 1985, republished as a paperback in a new edition by the Diogenes Verlag in Zurich. The restoration of the Lake Constance paddle steamer *Hohentwiel* and its re-introduction into service in 1990 may well have contributed to revitalizing the memory of Scheffel's novel in that area. More than anything else, however, a film made for television has given new life to the historical figure of Ekkehart II and especially to Ekkehard, the protagonist of Scheffel's novel. So much so, in fact, that an *Institut für ganzheitliche Kulturanimation* (a cultural society) even found it worthwhile to organize outings for tourists to Hohentwiel and St. Gall to search for traces of Ekkehart/Ekkehard.[45] In observation of the millennial of the death of Ekkehart II on April 23, 1990, Radio Bremen, together with the Swiss television network DRS and the Budapest state television network, produced between 1986 and 1989

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[43] See Ferdinand Gross, 'Das Schöne am Ekkehard', *Jahrbuch des Scheffel-Bundes* (1897), 56–71.

[44] *Literarische Gesellschaften in Deutschland. Ein Handbuch*, ed. by Christiane Kussin (Berlin: Aufbau-Verlag, 1995), pp. 198ff.

[45] D. Felber, 'Überlegungen zum Transformationsprozess bei Literatur-Adaptionen dargestellt am Beispiel des Fernsehfilms Ekkehard nach dem gleichnamigen Roman von J. V. v. Scheffel' (unpublished Lizentiatsarbeit, University of Berne, 1990), p. 88.

the made-for-television film *Ekkehard*, directed by Diethard Klante.[46] In Switzerland the film was shown on the DRS network in six installments during April and May, 1989. On the average, it was seen each time by approximately 288,000 viewers.[47] Representatives of the intellectual and political life of the city, who were interviewed by the *St. Galler Tagblatt* on their impressions of the first installment, were not particularly inclined to express their views on the slant taken by the film version or the image of the Middle Ages portrayed therein. Just like the critics of Scheffel's novel, they were, however, disturbed about details such as the behavior of certain figures or insignificant aspects of the monastery's daily life, i.e., about perceptions presented by the film which contradicted their own knowledge of Scheffel's novel or of the Gallus monastery.[48]

The origins of the novel and its sources

From his childhood, Scheffel had enjoyed a close relationship to the countryside and to the history of Lake Constance, particularly the district of Hegau. When he began to get interested in the subject of his novel, it was self-evident to him that he would have to study local history as well as topography. Actually, he had not originally planned to write a novel, but rather had hoped, after 1850, to obtain his 'Habilitation' at the University of Heidelberg by writing a book on a subject in legal history. In the process of researching his sources, he had come across the *Casus sancti Galli*, which had been published in 1829 by the librarian of St. Gall monastery, Ildefons von Arx, in the series *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, printed in Hanover. He was clearly captivated by the documents. Even Gustav Freytag took material a few years later from the Chronicles of the St. Gall monastery while preparing his *Bilder der deutschen Vergangenheit* ('Images of the German Past,' 1859/1867). Scheffel must have given up his plans for a 'Habilitationsschrift' soon thereafter, in order to concentrate on bringing alive a literary version 'of a story dating from the tenth century' (the subtitle of his novel). To that end he travelled in Spring, 1854 to the eastern part of Switzerland in order 'to put together some notes in the old monastery library of St. Gall,' as his mother wrote in a

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[46] See Ursula Blättler, 'Kloster, Kriege und Lust und Liebe', *Zoom*, 41.7 (1989), and Ernst Tremp, 'Rückkehr zu einem finsteren Mittelalter? Geschichten um Ekkehardus Palatinus, von den Casus sancti Galli zum Fernsehfilm', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*,76.2 (1994), 451–87.

[47] Felber, p. 88.

[48] *St. Galler Tagblatt*, 17 April 1989: 'Nur wenig Bezug zu St. Gallen.'

letter to a friend of the family. 'These would eventually form the basis of a book which was to provide an idea of life at Castle Hohentwiel a thousand years ago, at the time of Duchess Hadwig and Abbot Ekkehard'.[49]

Scheffel had already come across motifs for his novel earlier and in other places: in the memories he had of his grandfather Magnus, the last porter in the former Benedictine monastery Gengenbach, in the stories told by his grandmother, in tales from the countryside around Lake Constance, in a family album of an ancestor on his mother's side who had lived in the sixteenth century, Georg Balthasar Krederer, the Castle Captain of the counts of Sulz at Küssaburg near Säckingen,[50] in the *Geschichten des Kantons St. Gallen* by Ildefons von Arx, in J. G. Ebel's descriptions of the canton of Appenzell, Titus Tobler's *Appenzellischer Sprachschatz*, Bernhard Bader's *Volkssagen aus dem Lande Baden*, Wilhelm Wackernagel's *Altdeutsches Lesebuch*, in the sagas, old law codes, and the *Deutsche Mythologie* published by the Grimm Brothers. There are numerous references to medieval works such as the *Hildebrandslied*, the beast epic *Ecbasis captivi*, dramas by Roswitha von Gandersheim, the *Physiologus*, *Ruodlieb*, Regino von Prüm's *Chronicon*, Einhard's *Vita Caroli Magni*, Hinkmar von Reins's records (*Annalen*), the *Gesta Francorum* of Gregor von Tours, the Reichenau Chronicle of Hermann der Lahme (the Lame), poems by Walahfrid Strabo, the *Vita S. Liobae* as well as manuscripts in the monastery library such as the *Liber Benedictionum*, the *Vocabularius sancti Galli*, Notker I's (Balbulus) *Gesta Karoli Magni*, Folchard's *Codex aureus* or the *Annales S. Gallenses majores*. His major source was, however, Ekkehart IV's *Casus sancti Galli*:

> Despite considerable self-consciousness and clumsiness, there can be found therein a number of delightful stories handed down from older contemporaries and from the reports of eyewitnesses. People and circumstances are delineated in crude, but clear lines; there is much unconscious poetry, [the image of a] guileless, brave world, as well as philosophy of life, a naive freshness, which everywhere lends the stamp of genuineness to what has been written down.[51]

Scheffel, with his transfiguring view of the poet, sees in this work figures 'at first surrounded by a surging fog, then clear and

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[49] Scheffel's mother to Schwanitz; Klinke, 107.

[50] See Wilhelm Zentner, 'Vor hundert Jahren wurde Scheffels 'Ekkehard' geschrieben. Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Romans', *Bodensee-Hefte*, 5 (1954), 119–20, and Proelss, 'Scheffels schwäbische Vorfahren und sein *Ekkehard*', *Scheffel-Jahrbuch*, (1905/06), 1–17.

[51] 'Afterword', in *Ekkehard*, p. 433.

transparent, and they appeal to him wringing their hands, dancing around him in the dead of night and calling out: 'Make us into poetry!'[52]

Scheffel is happy to comply with their request. Requiring concrete visualization as a creative impulse and the *genius loci* as an inspiration, he moves into the dairy farm at the foot of the Hohentwiel and begins the novel. He 'worked on it like a dog' and, in the final analysis, it 'gave him a lot of difficulty'.[53] In order to write the last chapters, he ensconced himself in September, 1854 southwest of St. Gall at the Wildkirchli, a mountain refuge open to the public and situated in the Alps on Seealp Lake (Appenzell canton), among the rough contours of the Alpstein mountain range. 'Whoever derives his revelations from old Mother Nature creates poetry that is true and real'.[54] These are the words Scheffel has his Ekkehard murmur when, just like his literary creator, he seeks refuge and convalescence while composing the *Waltharilied* at the Waldkirchli on the Säntis, the highest mountain and the most visible landmark from afar in the countryside between Alpstein and Lake Constance. Through the composition of this epic, poetry becomes for him the expression, inspired by nature, of his innermost being. The parallels here to real life are obvious. Before Scheffel had left for St. Gall to pursue his literary aspirations, his cousin Emma Heim, whom he had revered and desired, had married another. Scheffel sought to forget the pain of his unrequited love in the mountainous surroundings:

'Mich trieb's hinauf vom Hohentwiel In mächtiger Höhe zu weilen Am Säntis in würziger Alpenluft Die kranke Seele zu heilen.'[55]	[I longed to move above Hohentwiel and to dwell in the mighty heights, to heal my sick soul in the biting alpine air of the Säntis.]

This is how Scheffel reminisced in a poem for the Escherwirt (the name given to the innkeeper who formerly managed the Wildkirchli), which he wrote down in the guest book of the Wildkirchli, where he had resided for several weeks.

At the end of the year 1854, Scheffel was still clearly consumed by the ambition to do research. Before the novel was published, he declared that, in order to 'to accord with the wishes of friends who were experts on the subject,' he had 'provided in footnotes the names

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[52] 'Afterword', *Ekkehard*, p. 434.

[53] Scheffel to Schwanitz (Karlsruhe, 8 December 1854); Klinke, p. 108.

[54] *Ekkehard*, p. 380.

[55] Emil Bächler, 'Wildkirchli – Josef Viktor Scheffel – *Ekkehard*', Bächler, *Das Wildkirchli* (St. Gall: Tschudy, 1936), pp. 216–43 (p. 239).

of some works and references to the sources, to placate those who might otherwise be inclined to assume that what I have described consists solely of fables and products of my imagination'.[56] To be sure, the 285 technical notes (for example 'read **x** instead of **y**') are not much more than somewhat stilted accessories, because the supposed scholarly references and explanations are often quite inaccurate, embellished, or simply false. Scheffel can hardly have believed that his readers would struggle through this wasteland of footnotes. These references thus remain primarily a somewhat pompous means of certifying the historical authenticity Scheffel claimed for his novel; they are meant to provide, through their positivistic presentation of facts, an historical legitimization of the tale that has been recounted. As a literary medium, so to speak, they serve, just as the anachronistic style of narrative, the interjected pseudo-documents, the countless quotations and source references, the historical places, events, and persons, to bolster the fiction that Scheffel's *Ekkehard* had been faithful to history and could claim to be historically accurate. They naturally document as well his scholarly diligence, which is aimed at securing a permanent testimonial to Scheffel's knowledge of history and literature.[57]

The manner in which one gains access to the Middle Ages and the perceptions a person may have of that period invariably bear the stamp of the present age and the horizons and perspectives associated with the latter. Scheffel's idealized vision of the Middle Ages[58]accorded with his desire to incorporate the reconstruction of the far past into his own reality. History thus became for Scheffel a creative inspiration, since he discovered in the alterity of the Middle Ages both 'deep roots of "what was peculiar to himself" as well as of "true reality"'.[59] Scheffel's 'novel from the tenth century' is ultimately based on this concept of reception. The carefully chosen preposition 'from' in the subtitle indicates that Scheffel used the latter in a pseudo-historical way

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[56] 'Nachwort', *Ekkehard*, p. 435.

[57] See R. Clyde Ford, 'Scheffel als Romandichter' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, university of Munich, 1900); S. G. Mulert, *Scheffels Ekkehard als historischer Roman. Ästhetisch-kritische Studie* (Münster: Schöningh, 1909); Walter Grebe, *Die Erzähltechnik Viktor Scheffels* (Barmen-Wichlingh: Montanus & Ehrenstein, 1919); Eduard Stempflinger, *Kulturhistorische Deutung. Scheffel, Julius Braun, Lingg* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1939); Helmut von Jan, 'J. v. Scheffels Verhältnis zur Historie', *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte des Oberrheins*, 97 (1949), 539–606.

[58] Lotte Bus, 'Die Geschichte im Erzählwerk Joseph Viktor von Scheffels' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, university of Munich, 1944), pp. 98–134.

[59] Otto Gerhard Oexle, 'Das entzweite Mittelalter', *Die Deutschen und ihr Mittelalter. Themen und Funktionen moderner Geschichtsbilder vom Mittelalter*, ed. by Gerd Althoff (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992), pp. 7–28.

as though it were a reference source intended to denote the origins of what was undoubtedly a story passed down from the time of the Ottonian rulers. To Scheffel, that era appeared to be of fundamental significance for the intellectual life of Germany and the subsequent development of a national culture in the centuries to come, all of which were subject to the course of history. The bourgeois struggle to create the national state in the nineteenth century also shaped Scheffel's view of the Middle Ages.[60] Scheffel wished to 'actualize' the spirit of that time. He perceived it as having an active influence on the present. He believed that the latter, with its tormented reality, was, in a negative way, so very different from the Middle Ages. His novel depicts the tenth century as the period which saw the emergence of a German people, and in which were manifested the natural originality and strength of German culture, a decisive stage in the formation of a nation as a people and a 'Reich' under the leadership of the Ottonian emperors. This historical perspective, as well as Scheffel's use of historical details and, above all, the didactic intention to present history from a romantic, idealized point of view, evince certain substantive links to Georg Gottfried Gervinus's work *Geschichte der poetischen National-Literatur der Deutschen* which appeared in the year 1835.[61] They also show intended dovetailing with the first volume of Wilhelm Giesebrecht's *Geschichte der deutschen Kaiserzeit*, which appeared in 1855. Giesebrecht's book had the declared intention of urging the young elite in Germany to 'learn from our depiction of the glory of the old Reich that it was principally the heroic Christian virtues of our forbears which made them free, powerful, and great'.[62]

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[60] Hartmut Boockmann, *Die Gegenwart des Mittelalters* (Berlin: Siedler, 1988), pp. 7ff.

[61] Scheffel to Wilhelm Meier-Ott in Zurich (Karlsruhe, 30 November 1854); Klinke, p. 110: 'I acquired the material [for the novel] at an earlier time, taking as a basis Gervinus's work and by studying the sources, to some degree with a monographic exactness [...].'

[62] Wilhelm Giesebrecht, *Geschichte der deutschen Kaiserzeit*, 3rd edn (Braunschweig: Schwetschke, 1863), I, XV–XVI.

The Chronicles of St. Gall Monastery

The author of the Chronicles of the St. Gall monastery used by Scheffel is Ekkehart IV.[63] An astute detection by Duft led to the substitution of 't' for 'd' –[64] in contrast to the spelling used for the hero of the novel. Ekkehart IV was most likely born about 980 and died after 1057.[65] His mentor was the famous 'Grosslefzigte' ('Big Lips'),[66] Notker III, named Teutonicus, and he himself became a highly influential teacher. After 1022, Ekkehart resided in Mainz with Archbishop Aribo. In 1030, he conducted the Easter Choir in the Palatinate Chapel in Ingelheim, augmented by three bishops who were his former pupils. After the death of Aribo in 1031, Ekkehart returned to St. Gall. His legacy includes epitaphs, didactic poems, the titles for cycles of illustrations in the planned reconstruction of the Mainz Cathedral and in the Gallus monastery, blessings, the completion of Notker's Prayer Book, the Latin translation of Ratpert's *Gallus-Lied* and, above all, the continuation of Ratpert's monastery chronicle for the period between ca. 870 and 972, the famous *Casus sancti Galli* in several copies.[67]

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[63] See Hans Bork, 'Ekkehard IV', *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, ed. by Wolfgang Stammler (Berlin and Leipzig: de Gruyter, 1933), cols. 535–41; Heinrich Hüschen, 'Ekkehard von St. Gallen', *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik.* (Kassel and Basel: Bärenreiter, 1954), III, cols. 1236–43; Franz Brunhölzl, 'Ekkehart (Ekkehard) IV', *Neue deutsche Biographie* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1959), IV, 433–34; Brunhölzl, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters* (Munich: Fink, 1992), II, 438–46; Hans F. Haefele, 'Ekkehard IV. von St. Gallen', *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittealters. Verfasserlexikon,* 2nd edn, ed. by Kurt Ruh (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1980), II, cols. 455–65.

[64] Johannes Duft, 'Ekkehardus – Ekkehart. Wie Ekkehart IV. seinen Namen geschrieben hat', *Variorum munera florat. Latinität als prägende Kraft mittelalterlicher Kultur. Festschrift für Hans F. Haefele*, ed. by Adolf Reinle and others (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1985), 83–90.

[65] See Arno Borst, *Mönche am Bodensee. 610–1525* (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1978); Manfred Fuhrmann, 'Die Brücke zwischen den Zeitaltern. Zur Blüte der Bodenseeklöster im 9. und 10. Jahrhundert', Fuhrmann, *Brechungen. Wirkungsgeschichtliche Studien zur antik-europäischen Bildungstradition* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982), pp. 96–112 (97ff); Haefele, 'Aus der Welt der Ekkeharde', *Schriften des Vereins für Geschichte des Bodensees und seiner Umgebung*, 108 (1990), 1–11.

[66] Ildefons von Arx, *Geschichten des Kantons St. Gallen* (St. Gall, 1810; repr. St. Gall: Löpfe-Benz, 1987), I, 267ff.

[67] Eberhard Url, 'Das mittelalterliche Geschichtswerk "Casus sancti Galli". Eine Bestandsaufnahme', *109. Neujahrsblatt*, ed. by Historischer Verein des Kantons St. Gallen (1969), 3–58.

A narrative using dramatic scenes groups the 'casus,' i.e., the vicissitudes of earthly occurrences, according to the key historiographical ideas of Boethius, around 'fortunia' and 'infortunia,' fortune and misfortune. These can be described as the two poles between which the history and fate of the monastery transpire.[68] Scheffel, who is at odds with his own time, may well have felt a special attachment to the St. Gall chronicler. Ekkehart's marvelously anecdotal descriptions transfigure the past, specifically that of the monastery, in the decades prior to the advent of the Cluniac reforms, which Ekkehart not only rejected but the consequences of which he also deplored.[69] Scheffel is also characterized by a lack of enthusiasm for his time, since the motivation for his novel is the uneasiness he feels towards the present. It is in his literary work that he elects to transform a faraway past into a glorious history.

Scheffel takes his main theme from chapters eighty-nine through ninety-one of the *Casus sancti Galli*, i.e., the relationship between Hadwig and Ekkehard. He also makes use of prior chapters and older historical events when dealing with certain parts of the plot, such as the aforementioned Wiborada episode, or as in the case of individual figures such as Wendelgard or Heribald, as well as major events such as the invasion of the Huns. It is thus not Scheffel's intention to make a novel out of the *Casus sancti Galli* or to expand them into an epic. He makes use of only a few chapters and figures for his story and as a reservoir of motifs for an independently conceived story. The latter takes historical locations, historical figures, and historical events and arranges them in an original narrative, putting them together with events as well as figures he has made up to form a panorama of history in the form of a novel; the image of the Middle Ages within this panorama has most certainly originated from the Ekkehart Chronicle and other materials passed down from previous eras.

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[68] See *Ekkehardi IV. Casus Sancti Galli/Ekkehard IV. St. Galler Klostergeschichten*, ed. by Haefele, Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters, Freiherr von Stein-Gedächtnisausgabe (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1980), X; Haefele, 'Zum Aufbau der Casus sancti Galli Ekkehards IV', *Typologia litterarum. Festschrift für Max Wehrli*, ed. by Stefan Sonderegger and others (Zurich: Atlantis, 1969), pp. 155–66; Max Manitius, 'Scheffels Ekkehard und die Sanktgaller Klosterchronik', *Westermanns Illustrierte Deutsche Monatshefte*, 48 (1904), 643–50; Wunderlich, '...iocundum quiddam de eo dicemus. Scherz und Posse in den St. Galler Klostergeschichten Ekkeharts IV', *Sprachspiel und Lachkultur. Beiträge zur Literatur- und Sprachgeschichte. Rolf Bräuer zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. by Ulrich Müller and others, Stuttgarter Arbeiten zur Germanistik, 300 (Stuttgart: Heinz, 1994), pp. 3–27.

[69] Georg Thürer, *St. Galler Geschichte. Kultur, Staatsleben und Wirtschaft in Kanton und Stadt St. Gallen* (St. Gall: Tschudy, 1953), p. 118.

Images of the Middle Ages

Both the novel and the film version of *Ekkehard* intend to reflect in their images of the Middle Ages their own understanding of their respective eras. 'That period in southwest Germany can only be described as a lovely time, delightful for everyone who prefers the struggling, incomplete, but nonetheless healthy power of pure talent'.[70] That is how Scheffel imagines the tenth century to have been – and it is precisely according to this image that he shaped his novel. It makes the historical contemporary and historicizes the contemporary. This unblemished image of the Middle Ages is thoroughly influenced by Scheffel's understanding of the present. He shifts a crisis-ridden relationship between power and religion, the struggle for national identity, and the bourgeois perception of a nation of culture as a compensatory substitute for the elusive nation state, as well as his personal crises as an artist and lover, into an imaginary poetic world of the past, delineated by the cultural horizons of the nineteenth century. Even the film takes as its perspective a contemporary position. Holding up a mirror with a dark image of the Middle Ages, it has the viewer confront problems which, in the second half of the 1980s, largely determined our visions of the world and our perspectives on the future, both of which had assumed nightmarish characteristics: fear of an apocalypse, expectations that the world was coming to an end, threats to the environment.[71]

Scheffel's title figure, Ekkehard, is based on an amalgamation of characteristics of the historical Ekkehart I decanus[72] and Ekkehart II palatinus.[73] Ekkehart I, a member of a noble family situated in the vicinity of the abbey, lived from ca. 900 to 973 and held the office of decanus, Deputy to the Abbot. In Chapter 80 of the *Casus sancti Galli*, it is said that he was the author of a *Vita Waltharius manufortis*.[74] The *Casus* chronicler, Ekkehart IV, maintains that he later made stylistic

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[70] 'Afterword', *Ekkehard*, p. 433.

[71] Umberto Eco, *Auf dem Wege zu einem Neuen Mittelalter. Ein Lesebuch* (Munich: dtv, 1989), 65ff.

[72] Peter Stotz, 'Ekkehart I. von St. Gallen (Ekkehardus decanus)', *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*. 2nd edn, ed. by Kurt Ruh (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1980), II, cols. 447–53.

[73] Stotz, 'Ekkehard II. von St. Gallen (Ekkehardus palatinus)', *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, 2nd edn, ed. by Kurt Ruh (Berlin and New York: de Gruy-ter, 1980)., II, cols. 453–55.

[74] See Haefele, 'Vita Waltharis manufortis', *Festschrift Bernhard Bischoff zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, ed. by Johannes Autenrieht and Franz Brunhölz (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1971), pp. 260–71, and Gregor Vogt-Spira, ed. *Waltharius. Lateinisch/Deutsch*, Universal-Bibliothek, 4174 (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1994), 5ff.

revisions to it at the bequest of Aribo, Archbishop of Mainz. In his edition of the *Walthari-Lied* (1838), the Latin heroic epic about Walther and Hildegund, Jacob Grimm had equated this work with the *Vita Waltharius manufortis* which evidently had not been passed down as a written text.[75] In the latter instance, however, we are more likely dealing with the lost biography of a certain 'Walther Starkhand' or perhaps the distichs about a Waltharius from the chronicle of the upper Italian monastery of Novalese in the tenth century, than with the Latin epic written in hexameters from the end of the ninth. Moreover, the epic names in its prologue a certain brother Geraldus as the author. Nonetheless, Scheffel equates that suspicious *Vita Waltharius manufortis* with the heroic epic and attributes the work to his emotionally distraught hero Ekkehard. Towards the end of the novel, Ekkehard dictates the *Walthari-Lied* on the Säntis at the same time his old friend Konradus in Passau is concluding the original (Latin) version of the *Nibelungenlied*. This reflects some wishful thinking on the part of Scheffel with respect to literary history, prompted as he was by the reference in the *Klage* to a scribe by the name of 'meister Cuonrât,' described as the person who was commissioned by Bishop Pilgrim of Passau to record the fate of the Nibelungs.[76]

Ekkehart II, the nephew and pupil of the decanus, died in the year 990. The *Casus sancti Galli* describe him as a handsome and strong young man – 'Nemini unquam Benedicti cuculla decentius insederat'[77] – and as a wise mentor as well as a great scholarly authority. The Italian grammarian Gunzo paints a less flattering picture. He was a member of the entourage of Otto I when the latter visited the St. Gall monastery in 965. A student in the monastery, spurred on by a certain Master Achar, i.e., Ekkehart, had poked fun in a satirical poem at a certain mistake that Gunzo had made with a grammatical case. Gunzo later sought his revenge in an *Epistola ad Augienes*[78] to Reichenau, St. Gall's neighboring competitor monastery on the Lake Constance island – paraphrased in Scheffel's novel[79] – by voicing his suspicion that Ekke-hart had homoerotic tendencies and defamed his appearance as false splendor. The monastery chronicler

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[75] See, *Lateinische Gedichte des X. und XI. Jh.* ed. by Jac[ob] Grimm and Andr[eas] Schmeller (Göttingen: Im Verlage der Dieterischen Buchhandlung, 1838), pp. 57ff.

[76] *Diu Klage. Mit den Lesarten sämtlicher Handschriften*, ed. by Karl Bartsch (Leipzig, 1875; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1964), vv. 4441ff.

[77] Haefele, *Casus sancti Galli*, pp. 182–83: 'No one ever appeared more comely in Benedict's habit'.

[78] *Gunzo: Epistola ad Augienses. Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, ed. by Karl Manitius, Quellen zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters, 2 (Weimar: Böhlau, 1958), pp. 33–35.

[79] *Ekkehard*, pp. 259–61.

Ekkehart IV, however, extols his namesake as one of the most significant representatives of that glorious period in St. Gall's history, as yet undisturbed by the zeal of the Cluniac reformers, who contributed so much to the dissolution of harmony. In his view, Ekkehart II embodied a rare combination of grace and radiance, calligraphic and artistic talent, wisdom and refinement. The object of this praise was the author of sequences in honor of SS. Desiderius, Goridian and Epimach, as well as an antiphony and sequence to St. Afra. It is uncertain whether or not we can ascribe to him the verse commentary *De muliere forti*, which is based on Bede's commentary to the Proverbs. The work contains an ecclesiastic interpretation of the *Lob der tüchtigen Hausfrau* ('Praise of the efficient housewife') and is intended for the patron Hadewiga, who is, however, not identified more specifically.[80] Karl Langosch claimed to see in her the Swabian Duchess Hadwig and consequently suggested that Ekkehart II was the author of this panegyric.[81] However, we are more likely dealing here with the former head of the convent of Lindau (who had the same name, Hadwig), which would remove the necessary prerequisite for Ekkehart's candidacy as author of this verse commentary.[82]

The romantic, but unfulfilled, relationship between Hadwig and Ekkehard was made up by Scheffel. It was based on rather tenuous, subdued allusions which, in a subtle manner, do, in fact, cast some mild doubts on whether the teacher-pupil relationship was actually as harmless as it appeared, although no direct suspicion was expressed. The monastery chronicles do not record anything of an unhappy affair between a monk and a duchess. Chapter 90 of the *Casus sancti Galli* reports that Hadwig (ca. 938/40–994),[83] the ca. 35-year-old widow of the Swabian Duke Burchard II, arrived one day to pray at St.

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[80] 'Tuque cara deo nimis/Hadeuuiga et amabilis,/Nobilissima femina,/Te manu rogito pia:/Accipe istud opusculum,/Vestra quod donatio/Iure scribere iusserat.' *Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Poetae Latini Medii Aevi* (Munich: MGH, 1979), V, 601–10 (602).

[81] K[arl] L[angosch], 'Ekkehard II. (Nachtrag)', *Die deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters. Verfasserlexikon*, ed. by Wolfgang Stammler, continued by Karl Langosch (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1955), V, cols. 184–85.

[82] See Norbert Fickermann, 'Ein Werk Ekkehards II.?', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, 79 (1957), 351–54.

[83] See Rolf Grosse, 'Hadwig', *Lexikon des Mittelalters* (Munich and Zurich: Artemis, 1989), IV, col. 1824; Karl Weiss, *Hohentwiel und Ekkehard in Geschichte, Sage und Dichtung* (St. Gall and Leipzig: Wiser & Frey, Merkur, 1901); Otto Feger, 'Herzogin Hadwig von Schwaben in Dichtung und Wirklichkeit', *Hohentwiel*, ed. by Herbert Berner (Constance: Stadler, 1957), pp. 114–24; Casimir Bumiller, *Hohentwiel. Die Geschichte einer Burg zwischen Festungsalltag und grosser Politik*, Beiträge zur Singener Geschichte, 20 (Constance: Stadler, 1994), pp. 30–35.

Gall. Ekkehart, who was serving as porter, was hired by her on the spot as a private tutor and taken back with her to Hohentwiel:

> Duellium die condicto cum egre exspectatus veniret, ultra, quam ipse vellet, susceptum in conclave suo proximum, suum, ut ipsa it, manu duxit magistrum. Ibi nocte et die cum familiari aliqua intrare solebat ad legendum pedissequa, foribus tamen semper apertis, tu, si quis etiam ausus, quid esset, nihil, quod diceret, sinistrum haberet. Illic quoque crebro ambos ministri et milites, princepes etiam terre lectioni aut consiliis invenerant agentes.[84]
> [When he arrived at Hohentwiel on the appointed day, he was already being awaited with impatience. Hadwig's greeting was friendlier than he himself would have liked. She led 'her master,' as she put it, by the hand into a room next to her own. She was accustomed to entering this room both day and night with a trusted lady-in-waiting in order to do some reading; but the doors were always left open, so that that even if someone began to talk about it, his words could not do any harm. Servants and vassals, even princes found the two of them repeatedly in the room together, reading or engaged in discussion.]

There are no reports of other activities in the monastery chronicles other than that this intemperate widow and 'astute Minerva' showered him with gifts. Not until the appearance of Scheffel's novel do we have a portrait of a widow obsessed with the desire for love, which then takes a tasteless turn in the *Singspiel* of Schulte vom Brühl and Röhr:

'Freiheit, Jugend, Land und Leute, Ach der stolzen Wittwenschaft! Lange Tage, lange Nächte, Und das Herz geschwellt von Kraft.'[85]	[Freedom, youth, land, and people, ah, to proud widowhood! Long days, long nights, and the heart swollen with strength.]

Even if the St. Gall Chronicles reflect the traditional image of the woman as a danger and threat to the cleric or a saintly life, that does not apply in the case of the chronicler Ekkehart IV. Although he may impart an impression of Hadwig as a woman who is as proud in her majesty as she is eccentric, he also conveys the image of a self-assured and exceptionally well-cultivated noblewoman, who left her stamp on the in-tellectual life of the Ottonian age. It is said that she endowed the monastery's library with a Horace Codex as an expression of her thanks for the instruction provided by Ekkehart. It was also at Hadwig's request that Ekkehart for some time was designated to be the

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[84] Haefele, *Casus Sancti Galli*, pp. 186–87.

[85] *Ekkehard. Dramatische Dichtung in 3 Theilen*. Adapted freely from J. V. von Scheffel's novel by W. Schulte vom Brühl. Composed for soloists, choir, and orchestra by Hugo Röhr. Libretto (Stuttgart: Luckhardts Musikverlag, 1900), p. 3.

Abbot of the monastery at Ellwangen. Hadwig, herself a member of the Liudolfing family, later introduced Ekkehart to the Ottonian court where he was employed in the chapel royal. This is why he was accorded the nickname *palatinus*, 'courtier.' It is not clear whether he was already a member of the chapel royal of Otto I as a mentor to Otto II, but there is no doubt that he was the chaplain to Otto II and that he later became Dean of Mainz Cathedral under Archbishop Willigis, where he died in 990. Ekkehart II was buried in St. Alban. He had never again returned to St. Gall.

Contrary to the description provided by Ekkehart IV, Hadwig, daughter of Duke Heinrich I of Bavaria, was never herself a duchess, although at one time she is said to have been promised as wife to a Byzantine monarch. After the death of Hadwig's husband Burchhard II of Swabia in 973, Otto II had turned over the duchy to his cousin Otto (who was followed in 982 by a Frank called Konrad) in an effort to supplement the royal familial holdings. Until her death in the year 994, Hadwig resided at Castle Hohentwiel just north of Singen. The castle had been fortified since 914 and the war of the Swabian dukes against Bishop Salomo III of Constance. Throughout the entire tenth century, St. Gall was visited regularly by the Swabian dukes; it was an imperial abbey on which the power of the dukes rested. The *Casus sancti Galli* also contain a description of a festive *susceptio* ('undertaking') by Hadwig, who had presented the monastery with the royal demesne of Sasbach at Kaiserstuhl. This took place in the Gallus monastery with the Abbot officiating, along with the presentation of gifts. The right to power over the imperial monasteries in his *provincia* which was claimed by the duke was quite publicly assumed by Hadwig with the justification that the Gallus monastery enjoyed all of the rights of imperial freedom under her rule.

Neither the characters nor the life style of Scheffel's love couple correspond to the personalities who can be found in the sources. His Ekkehard is not a cleric from the spiritual world of the tenth century, but rather the ideal of a struggling artist of the nineteenth century which has been sublimated into a literary form. Moreover, Hadwig as a concerned housewife and a widow in love, is an image more in keeping with a Biedermeier arbour than a medieval castle. Thus, certain elements that are described in the novel – the emotional inhibitions, inexperience, self-forgetfulness, abstinence, and genius on the part of Ekkehard, unrequited love, arrogance, broken pride, moody capriciousness on the part of Hadwig – are not conflict-laden antitheses between worldly needs and monastic obligations which come together from some form of logical action and psychological plausibility that can be historically reconstructed. The hero of Scheffel's novel, who – and one can say this without resorting to a

trivial form of biographical comparison – evinces some of Scheffel's own characteristics, had to be a monk, because fate dictated that he could not love as a man, and not simply because the novel set out to tell the historically authentic story of a Benedictine monk of the tenth century. Physical-sensual desire, sexual attraction, and erotic longing undergo a reversal, with love becoming oriented towards selfless denial, caring attraction, and a devotion to God that promises salvation, because Scheffel and his hero in each case make a virtue out of necessity.

Ekkehart IV's chronicle is certainly not free of historical inaccuracies and embellishments, and accordingly, Scheffel's novel is composed of a mixture of poetry and truth, the historical and geographical credibility of which is certified and affirmed by countless details. It is, therefore, futile to criticize the novel for its diversions, historical patchwork, distortions, as well as its anachronisms. In this mixture of pure invention and historically verifiable details, the poetic freedom of the author is truly given its due.

The most famous scene in the novel is a product of the poet's imagination. The *Singspiel* and the film also make this scene into a central event. Abbot Cralo wishes to prevent the princess from entering the monastery. So that 'no woman may ever set foot across the threshold of the monastery,' Ekkehard, in his capacity as porter, suggests to the Abbot in the *Singspiel* that the visitor, who is adamant about entering, be *carried* across the threshold – a sophistic as well as a diplomatic means of resolving the conflict:

'Bedenket, Des Klosters Schirmvogt ist die Herzogin, In solcher Eigenschaft als Mann zu achten; Und Einlaß kann der Vogt als Recht begehren. Wir wollen, Brüder, die Gewalt nicht reizen! Darf eine Frau die Schwell' auch nicht betreten, Wohlan, so mag man sie darüber tragen.'[86]	[Consider, that the monastery's patron is the duchess; in this capacity she is to be regarded as a man. And the patron can quite justifiably desire to enter. Brothers, we do not want to provoke the powers that be. If a woman is not permitted to step across the threshold, then fine, let someone simply carry her across.]

With obvious delight in this scene, Scheffel's narrator tells how Hadwig enjoys her transportation across the threshold of the monastery: 'But he was undaunted and picked up the duchess in his strong arms, she de-lighted in snuggling up to her "porter," and placed her right arm over his shoulder'.[87]

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[86] Schulte vom Brühl/Röhr, p. 5.
[87] *Ekkehard*, p. 29.

This episode from the novel evokes the symbolism of the threshold in popular custom and belief. For the monks, the threshold was considered the border on the other side of which were the evil spirits and diabolic temptations which had to be kept at a good distance from the monastery. Scheffel's Hadwig naturally represented just such a temptation. The fact that she is carried by Ekkehard over the threshold, just as a bride is carried over the threshold of her new home at the beginning of her marriage prior to its consummation, is a harbinger of the later love affair, while the obvious reference to the monastery indicates that it is doomed. According to Scheffel's biographers, this scene can be traced back to an anecdotical experience of the author. During a sojourn in Italy, Scheffel had once appeared in the Capuchin monastery of Ava Coeli near Palazzuola in the company of a certain Miss Bensinger. The Prior is supposed to have jokingly suggested that Scheffel ought to carry the young lady across the threshold, as she wanted to see the interior of the monastery. In contrast to the Duchess of Swabia, however, the young lady from Swabia apparently declined the offer.[88] Even if this episode did not take place quite the way it has been reported, we can say that at least it makes a nice literary subject.

Apart from the love story, the Hunnish incursions play an important role in Scheffel's novel. Over the space of four chapters, Scheffel gives an account of how the Hunnish barbarians attack the country and lay waste to it. He transposes the historical invasions by the Hungarians in the early tenth century and the plundering of the monastery, which occurred in 926, into the plot of *Ekkehard*, which takes place half a century later. The manner in which Scheffel anachronistically transforms the early medieval Hungarians into the Huns of the period of migrations, strengthens the frightening image of barbaric heathens propagated by the people who were invaded. The Huns serve as a contrast to those figures who embody the German national characteristics as well as a Christian resolve to fight. There are obvious parallels here to the image of Hungarians which Ekkehart I provides in his *Wiborada-Vita*: the Hungarians are an instrument of the almighty judge, whose anger has been aroused by a sinful mankind.[89] The chronicles of Ekkehart IV most assuredly contain accounts of the horrors and negative consequences of war, but these are not portrayed in gory, realistic detail, nor are they elevated to a heroic plane. Scheffel, on the other hand, very much enjoys providing martial and bombastic descriptions of the course of a war which scarcely has anything to do with the history of the Hungarian invasions in the area around Lake Constance in the early tenth century. The marauding

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[88] Proelss, *Scheffel. Ein Dichterleben.* (Stuttgart: Bonz, 1902), pp. 171–72.
[89] Berschin, pp. 77ff.

Hunnish hordes are defeated during a battle in an open field – a product of Scheffel's imagination – which takes place, interestingly enough, on Good Friday between Hohentwiel and Lake Constance. It is reminiscent of the decisive battle on the Lechfeld in 955, when Otto I. defeated and destroyed the Hungarian armies. The description of the battle found in the novel is sublimely beautiful and filled with theatrical heroism. The film takes another route and portrays the horror of war realistically; it is meant to serve as a deterrent, to make people aware of the brutality, hatred, violence and destruction of our own time. Scheffel's imagination, and nothing else, is responsible for producing a protagonist who gives a good account of himself as a 'warrior'. That image is replaced in the film by an 'anti-hero' who is horrified at the idea of killing.

The manner in which this battle is described also provides us with an example to observe Scheffel's repeated tendency to integrate historical figures as fictitious characters into his plot, even some from periods other than the time in which the novel is set. The favorable outcome of the battle for a hodgepodge army made up of knights and monastic brothers is determined by a duel between the Hunnish army general Ellak and the 'old man in the *Heidenhöhle* ('heathens' cave').' Scheffel makes use here of the tales surrounding Karl der Dicke ('Karl the Fat'),[90] who is not supposed to have died after his deposal, but – as later on Barbarossa in the Kyffhäuser Mountain – bides his time in a cave above the Überling section of Lake Constance until the moment for him to fight in the last battle has arrived. During the reign of Karl the Fat, who originally ruled only in Alemannia and Churrätia and was a frequent visitor in the Gallus monastery,[91] the Frankish Empire was united for the last time under the Carolingians. Karlmann, who was deathly ill, had turned over his claim to Italy to Karl, who, in 881, as Karl III, received the imperial crown from Pope John VIII. After the death of his brothers Karlmann in 880 and Ludwig III (the Younger) in 882, Karl also took over their lands. He had thus become the sole ruler of the East Frankish Empire without having undertaken any measures or exerting any effort on his own to acquire it. The sons of his West Frankish cousin, Ludwig II (the Stutterer), Ludwig III and Karlmann, died in 882 and 884 respectively and neither left any heirs. The West Frankish nobility, feeling threatened by the Normans, optimistically invited Karl III to rule over West Franconia. With that one stroke, the Greater Frankish Empire had

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[90] Hans Maurer, 'Sagen um Karl III', *Institutionen, Kultur und Gesellschaft im Mittelalter. Festschrift für Joseph Fleckenstein zu seinem 65. Geburtstag*, ed. by Lutz Fenske and others (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1984), pp. 93–99.

[91] Von Arx, pp. 74–75.

again been united under one ruler. However, Karl III suffered from severe epilepsy and soon proved to be an inept and timid regent. He was forced to abdicate in 887 by his nephew, Arnulf of Carpathia, the son of the East Frankish Karlmann. He died in 888.[92] Scheffel's portrayal of Karl III is nothing short of a complete distortion of history. The 'Old Man in the *Heidenhöhle*' embodies both the image of a ruler and savior as well as the motif of the eternal return. At best, however, this can be demonstrated in a typological fashion in the formation of legends surrounding the former royal court of Neudingen at the uppermost course of the Danube. This was the last residence of Karl before his death, and tales arose here regarding Karl's demise and his continual return in the form of a demon. The role and function of Scheffel's protagonist have nothing to do with historical reality. Scheffel's Karl figure lends expression to the pain that was felt in Germany over the unsuccessful national-liberal aspirations and the desire of the bourgeoisie for national unity following the abortive March Revolution of 1848. In his novel, Scheffel has the sprightly old fellow complain about the depravity of contemporary discord as he waxes enthusiastic about the power and greatness of the Reich when it used to be unified under a strong ruler.

Scheffel's novel ends with Ekkehard maturing to become a new Virgil and we learn nothing more about the brilliant career which the historical Ekkehart II was yet to have. The film steers a completely different course. Instead of his apotheosis as a poet, Ekkehard ends up experiencing his greatest degradation. In contrast to the novel, the film is not concerned with the artistic self-discovery of Ekkehard, but rather with depicting the psychologically credible attitude of an individual who virtually goes to pieces as a result of the mercilessness of life's realities. It is an attitude which is molded by the experiences of civilization and the perspective of our time with its skeptical view of history. Devastated by his unhappy love, a desperate Ekkehard ends up on an unbeaten path and wishes only to make an end of his apparently meaningless life by drowning himself in a lake. However, he has a change of heart at the last moment and wades back to shore. The film ends with a fading in of the historical Ekkehart's future life. This documentary device certainly suggests that the film's fictitious plot is to be seen as a precursor to and prerequisite for the events that actually followed in the life of Ekkehart II. In this way, fiction and fact are related to each other and seduce the viewer into making unjustified historical conclusions.

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[92] Bernd Schneidmüller, 'K. (III.) der Dicke', *Lexikon des Mittelalters*. (Munich and Zurich: Artemis, 1991), V, 968–69.

In contrast, Scheffel champions with the ending of his novel the idea of a purifying self-liberation and an emancipating discovery of one's self through an act of salvation – poetic creativity: 'Blessed is the man, who has passed the test!'[93] Such is the dedication – in the form of an apostolic proverb from Jacob – to be found on the manuscript copy of Ekkehard's *Walthari-Lied* that was dedicated to Hadwig and which carries his arrow, no longer taken from Amor's but rather from Agape's quiver, to Hohentwiel. In the final analysis, Ekkehard's unhappy love finds sublimation in poetic energy. In this respect, the *Singspiel* has the purified Ekkehard, almost as though he had been redeemed, proclaim in a tenor voice: 'Let the desires of the world remain in the valleys!'[94] The manner in which Scheffel conceives of himself as a writer and his view of the poet as the protagonist of creative immediacy are diametrically opposed to the perception of an author in the Middle Ages. Particularly the medieval works which Scheffel used as sources for his subject matter, above all Ekkehart IV's *Casus sancti Galli*, portray the author as the 'middleman' who is simply passing down something which God had already provided, and whose task it is to spread and reveal it through his office as writer. Authorial creation is reserved for God alone and for that reason a medieval author such as Ekkehart IV does not see himself as the creator, but rather as the modest conveyor or imparter, the administrator and protector of the truth of that which has been imparted from a prior time. For Scheffel's fictitious poet, on the other hand, the creative center lies in the ego of the author. It is no longer God or the Church which speaks as a higher entity through the inspired mouth of the poet. Rather, deriving his inspiration from nature and history, fate and life, the poet himself becomes a creator, who lives through his work and identifies this with his person. When Scheffel has his Ekkehard mature into a poet from inner necessity, he is basically taking the widely disseminated cliché in the nineteenth century of the poet as a solitary singer and providing it with a stylized and literary framework. For such a singer, art has become the very essence of life; it is in art that he finds reconciled the contradiction between base instincts and a higher calling. In this way, Scheffel's own fate became a creative impulse and a poetic motivation. He was completely, but also unhappily, in love with his cousin Emma Heim. For Scheffel, just as for his protagonist Ekkehard, who found himself in a comparable situation, poetry, as a creative act, pointed the way to coping with one's existence.

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[93] *Ekkehard*, p. 426.

[94] Schulte vom Brühl/Röhr, p. 30.

As an imitator, Scheffel was only able to do this through what might be called a literary tour de force, by resorting to affected, artificial stylization. In his prose, the countryside and nature in general are depicted in realistic detail and with exaggerated clarity as arenas dominated by emotions and moods, as lovely idylls, their healing, pristine state providing balsam for the suffering soul. The novel thus develops a completely different understanding of nature from the view prevailing in the time in which its story is set. The early Middle Ages, in particular, experienced nature more as an adversary of mankind.[95] The countryside and nature were not objects about which one reflected or which were described in an idealized manner. In the *Casus sancti Galli*, the experience of nature tends to be imparted indirectly as, for example, when accounts of a sojourn in the world outside the monastery or travel reports refer to extraordinary occurrences or even dangerous experiences. Scheffel's work, however, reflects a very different experience of nature. Wherever he looks, Ekkehard is confronted by a beautiful, ordered world, the loveliness of which affords him solace and inspiration. Here, too, the film is completely different. It brings to life the medieval environment with its natural wildness and the terrors by which mankind felt so threatened.

Some unintended humor characterizes Scheffel's extreme posturing with language. It tends to stagnate completely when he makes artificial use of old German forms and phrases. These were supposed to conjure up the 'couleur locale' of the Middle Ages.[96] Some examples: archaic words beginning with 'A' such as 'Atzung' ('feed') through 'Z' such as 'Zergängnis' ('dissolution'), modernizing expressions from Middle High German heroic poetry such as 'schlachtfroh' ('bellicose'), sighed interjections such as 'ei!' ('ah'!) which serve as artificial, emotionally-laden exclamations, the old-fashioned particles 'aber,' but without the adversative sense, and 'so' in the place of the relative pronoun, the prefix 'er', which is meant to imply something remarkable with verbs such as 'erschauen' ('catch sight of,' 'lay eyes on'), the genitive, solemnly placed before the noun as in 'des Klosters Schirmvogt' ('the monastery's patron'), important-sounding time constructions with the word 'ward' ('was'),

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[95] Norbert Brieskorn, *Finsteres Mittelalter? Über das Gefühl einer Epoche* (Mainz: Grünewald, 1991), pp. 59ff.

[96] Otto Heilig, 'Über Sprache und Stil in Scheffels Ekkehard', *Alemannia*, n.s. 2 (1901), 56–72, and Hans-Otto Hügel, 'Joseph Viktor von Scheffels 'Ekkehard' – wiedergelesen. Scheffel-Erfolg – Scheffel-Schelte.' *In der Residenz: Literatur in Karlsruhe 1715–1988. Eine Ausstellung des Instituts für Kulturpädagogik der Hochschule Hildesheim* ed. under the supervision of Hans-Otto Hügel (Karlsruhe: Müller, 1984), pp. 231–41.

undeclined adjectives without inflection such as 'ein wild Getier' ('wild animals'), neuter subjects such as 'keines wusste' ('no one knew'), final '-e' dropped in a dialect fashion in 'Gebirg' ('mountain range'), a missing auxiliary verb in phrases such as 'er auf dem Hohentwiel eingeführt worden' ('he [had been] introduced at Hohentwiel'), the countless silly diminutives, such as the 'Kräutlein' ('little herb[s]') and 'Blättlein' ('little leaf/leaves'), 'Sprüchlein' ('little saying[s]') and 'Büchlein' ('little book[s]'), 'Männlein' ('little man/men') and 'Mägdlein' ('little girl[s]/maiden[s]'). All of these simulate in a rather unctuous manner unpretentiousness and genuineness, naturalness, and heroism, and feign venerable tradition and the medieval literary language. In terms of content, the novel's plot is characterized by the superficially significant, for example, when Hadwig, during her reading of Virgil, is naturally compared with Dido who, hungry with love, ensnares Aeneas, or when the inner transformation of Ekkehard just happens to occur with 'profound' significance at the time of solstice.

Scheffel was an imitator, an emulator without any real creative talent of his own. His anti-modern stance determined his themes and the language he used. What he hoped to achieve was based on his awareness of the essential alterity of the Middle Ages when compared to the time in which he lived. Scheffel wished to 'procure' the brilliant model of the tenth century for his own nineteenth century. Nothing could make this clearer than his novel *Ekkehard.* He wanted to achieve more through the medium of poetry than he was capable of delivering from a literary, to say nothing of an historiographical, point of view. *Ekkehard* does not, then, represent any sort of cultural or historical panorama of, and most certainly not from, the glorious past of St. Gall. It is, rather, a highly illuminating document in literary history. *Ekkehard* demonstrates a tendency in the nineteenth century of liberal- and national-oriented bourgeois authors, often with modest literary talents, to attempt to cultivate an understanding of the past and come to terms with the present. They went about their 'mission' with passion and vigor, but, if one looks critically at the results, it was all in vain. Given the contradiction between desire and ability and with regard to the rapidly disappearing creative potential, we can say along with Scheffel himself: 'May God be with you! It would have been so lovely; may God be with you, it was not to be!'[97]

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[97] 'Lieder jung Werners', *J. V. von Scheffels Gesammelte Werke in sechs Bänden*, ed. by Johannes Proelss, 6 vols (Stuttgart: Bonz, [n.d.]), V, 161–62.

THE (FAI)LURE OF THE AESTHETIC IDEAL AND THE (RE)FORMATION OF ART: THE MEDIEVAL PARADIGM THAT FRAMES *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*

FELICIA BONAPARTE

EVERYONE KNOWS THAT WALTER PATER, writing what in effect would become the manifesto of aestheticism, opened his *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* by implicitly repudiating one of the fundamental principles of the Victorian ideal of art, namely that the task of the artist, as Matthew Arnold had first expressed it in his 1862 lecture at Oxford 'On Translating Homer'[1] – Arnold assuming here the role of the spokesman of his contemporaries as well as the arbiter of their judgment – was to seek 'to see the object as in itself it really is'. Quoting these words as though he agreed at the beginning of his 'Preface', Pater instantly subverts them, slipping in the qualification that 'the first step' towards that end is 'to know one's own impression as it really is'.[2] Many have held that between these two lies that moment in which was born the relativism and subjectivity of the modern point of view. I would, however, argue that Arnold is not so naïve as to believe in such a knowable reality. My sense of the Victorians, at least, is that they were acutely aware of the scepticism entailed in the empiricist philosophy which was taking over the age and that writers like Matthew Arnold were insisting so intently on a fixed, objective truth because they were all too keenly conscious that their epistemological grounds were sliding out from under them. What distinguishes Pater, rather, is that in those seventeen years between the date of his birth and Arnold's a different generation was born for whom the relative and subjective were not a burden but a release. From that moment aestheticism seemed to be inevitable, an aestheticism, moreover, indissolubly wedded to hedonism. For if the world outside our perceptions could only be a doubtful hypothesis, all one could vouch for were one's impressions. And, since there were no objective

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[1] *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*, ed. by Robert H. Super, 11 vols (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960–77), I, 140. Arnold repeated these very words two years later in his essay 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time' (see *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*, III, 258).

[2] Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry: The 1893 Text*, ed. by Donald L. Hill (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1980), p. xix.

criteria by which impressions could be evaluated, these could be neither false nor true nor, more importantly, right or wrong. All they could do was give pleasure or pain, often by their beauty or ugliness.

In a very important sense, Oscar Wilde was Pater's heir, and in some ways his creation, falling under the spell of the man during his early years at Oxford and under the spell of that very volume, a work he called his 'golden book' and which he almost committed to memory.[3] Indeed, whole phrases from that work make their way into *Dorian Gray*. 'Yes', for example writes Oscar Wilde, 'there was to be [...] a new Hedonism that was to recreate life. [...] Its aim' – and here comes a central sentence from the 'Conclusion' of Pater's book – 'was to be experience itself, and not the fruits of experience, sweet or bitter as they might be. [...] [I]t was to teach man to concentrate' – and this is another Paterian thought, not a quotation but a paraphrase, also taken from the 'Conclusion' – 'closely himself upon the moments of a life that is itself but a moment'.[4] In the same vein, he echoes Pater's repudiation of Matthew Arnold when, in 'The Decay of Lying', he observes that 'No great artist ever sees things as they really are. If he did he would cease to be an artist' (*Works*, p. 988). And almost the identical point is made in the 'Preface' to *Dorian Gray*: 'It is the spectator', writes Wilde in a metafictional vein, 'and not life, that art really mirrors'.

Many still see Wilde as an aesthete – Linda Dowling, for example, holds that Wilde believed in what she calls the 'Aristocracy of the Aesthete'[5] – but Ellman is right to suggest that 'aestheticism' was more 'a problem' for Wilde than 'a creed'.[6] We might say he felt a conflict between the beautiful and the good but it would probably be more accurate to say there were two identities in him – if one may propose such a thing without hinting at schizophrenia – one entirely committed to the principles of aestheticism, the other seriously disturbed by the moral neutrality of the aesthetic attitude. Wilde himself seems to have thought of his identity in this way, writing, for instance in one letter that, in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, he saw himself as both Basil and Dorian, the former, a deeply moral artist, being what he thought he was, the latter what he 'would like to be' but

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[3] Richard Ellman, *Oscar Wilde* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), p. 47.

[4] Pater, p. 188; Oscar Wilde, *The Complete Works of Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde*, with an Introduction by Vyvyan Holland (London and Glasgow: Collins, 1948, repr. 1984), p. 104. Subsequent references to Wilde's works will be given in parentheses in the body of the text.

[5] *The Vulgarization of Art: The Victorians and Aesthetic Democracy* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1996), chapter IV.

[6] P. 310.

only 'in other ages, perhaps'.[7] Illustrating this double attitude, the novel itself often expresses entirely antithetical views. Often it seems to support aestheticism. Thus, denying that art may be required to serve any end but its own, Lord Henry is made to say, for instance, that 'Art has no influence upon action. It annihilates the desire to act. It is superbly sterile' (*Works*, p. 163). Against the scurrilous reviews the novel received in many quarters, Wilde, again, defended his work frequently on aesthetic grounds. 'I am quite incapable', he wrote to Sidney James Mark Low, the editor of the *St. James's Gazette*, in response to comments made in his paper on the morality of the novel, 'of understanding how any work of art can be criticized from a moral standpoint. The sphere of art and the sphere of ethics are absolutely distinct and separate' (*Letters*, p. 257). He looks forward, he observes in a letter to someone else written at nearly the same moment, 'to the time when aesthetics will take the place of ethics, when the sense of beauty will be the dominant law of life' (*Letters*, p. 265). The 'Preface' Wilde wrote for *Dorian Gray*, only after the novel was published and in answer to those reviews that had quarrelled with its morals, takes a self-defensively brash position again on aesthetic grounds. 'My novel', he writes to one correspondent in March of 1891, 'appears in volume form next month, and I am curious to see whether these wretched journalists will assail it so ignorantly and pruriently as they did before. My preface should teach them to mend their wicked ways' (*Letters*, p. 290).

But there had never been a time when the earnestly moral Wilde – and I use the adverb advisedly – had not challenged the aesthete in him. In his earliest days at Oxford Pater had not been the only don who had cast a spell on Wilde. John Ruskin had affected him too, so much so he had volunteered to help Ruskin improve the countryside, work that entailed hard physical labor with shovel, wheelbarrow, and spade.[8] Ruskin, of course, was an aesthete too, but an aesthete who believed that the beautiful depended for its beauty on the good. Many at the end of the century saw this, as do many today, as characteristic of an era overzealous about morality. But I would argue that John Ruskin, and the age he helped define, were, if overzealous at all, so persistent on this issue only because it was clear to them that the connection between the two was on the verge of being severed, had indeed been severed already by the very relativism and subjectivity of the day, that they realized only too well that, if allowed to be cut

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[7] *The Letters of Oscar Wilde*, ed. by Rupert Hart-Davis (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962), p. 352. Subsequent references to Wilde's letters will be given in parentheses in the body of the text.

[8] Ellman, pp. 49ff.

completely, there would be nothing to keep beauty from slipping into an alliance with something other than the good, as it was doing already, in fact, in the aestheticism of the Decadence. Wilde himself is well aware of this. 'There were moments', Wilde observes of the protagonist of his novel, 'when he looked on evil simply as a mode through which he could realize his conception of the beautiful' (*Works*, p. 115). Pater himself was not untroubled by the dangers of aestheticism. When readers were shocked by what they recognized as the amoral view of art proffered in his *Renaissance*, especially in its closing remarks, Pater withdrew the offending 'Conclusion' from the subsequent edition, restoring it only some time later after making a number of changes and adding a footnote in which he conceded that there might have been 'young men' whom his words could have misled and that *Marius the Epicurean* might explain his meaning better.[9] And what *Marius* seeks to do is to establish a connection between aesthetics and religion, the hero, a Paterian aesthete, ending a spiritual convert, and pretty nearly a formal one, to the early Christian faith.

Oscar Wilde understood this well. In a letter to Alfred Douglas, written while he was in prison, Wilde remarked that what Pater sought in writing *Marius the Epicurean* was to 'reconcile the artistic life with the life of religion' (*Letters*, p. 476). He himself saw distinctly enough that the aesthetic could never serve as a foundation for the moral. He rejects that possibility explicitly in *Dorian Gray*. A '"charming artistic basis for ethics"', scoffs Lord Henry when Dorian expresses a fear that his soul might be rendered '"hideous"' if he continued in his sins (*Works*, p. 82). He himself was as eager as Pater to link the beautiful and the good. The very subject of *Dorian Gray* – and we have not sufficiently noted how large a part in Wilde's writings religion and morality play – alerts us to its deeper concerns. In the 'Preface', it is true, Wilde insisted on a distinction between the subject of a work and the author's perspective on it. The moral, he says, might serve as a subject but the artist could not allow himself to indulge in moral sympathies. And yet when a number of Christian newspapers praised the novel for its morality, Wilde accepted their approbation with amazing equanimity. Indeed, in that identical letter he wrote to Sidney James Mark Low about the review in *St. James's Gazette*, Wilde observed that the public would 'find' his was 'a story with a moral'. He grants it might be an 'error', artistically, that there should be one in a novel. But he proceeds to spell it out, ending with the frank admission 'Yes; there is a terrible moral in *Dorian Gray* – a moral

[9] P. 186.

which the prurient will not be able to find in it, but which will be revealed to all whose minds are healthy' (*Letters*, p. 259).

Wilde, in the very novel itself, provides a comment on this question by including in the narrative a reflexive paradigm, the book Lord Henry sends Dorian Gray. He does not name the book in the text but he describes it at some length:

> 'the sins of the world,' he writes, as Dorian opens it to peruse its pages, 'were passing in dumb show before him. [...] It was a novel without a plot, and with only one character, being, indeed, simply a psychological study of a certain young Parisian who spent his life trying to realize in the nineteenth century all the passions and modes of thought that belonged to every century except his own, and to sum up, as it were, in himself the various moods through which the world-spirit had ever passed, loving for their mere artificiality those renunciations that men have unwisely called virtue, as much as those natural rebellions that wise men still call sin' (*Works*, p. 101).

It has generally been assumed that this book is Joris-Karl Huysmans's 1884 novel *A Rebours* and Wilde confirmed as much at his trial.[10] He does not name it, however, I think, not only because he does not want to seem to be attacking Huysmans but because, remaining unnamed, the book can stand, self-referentially, as an allusion to his own. But there is a very real difference between Huysmans's book and Wilde's. Huysmans is a genuine aesthete. The hero tastes forbidden fruit but his creator makes no judgment, either authorially or in the manner in which the events are made to develop. That is why there is no plot. As Wilde so strikingly reminds us in his summary of the novel, in that true Paterian way that values experience for its own sake, the tasting for Huysmans is the point. Including that book in his own, however, Wilde rewrites it in a sense. Whether it is the book that poisons him, as he argues at one moment (*Works*, p. 149), or his own inclinations to sin which the book evokes in part (*Works*, p. 163), the fact is that, living a similar life, Dorian is not only corrupted but judged to be so by his author. Unlike Huysmans, Wilde subsumes the aesthetic under the moral.

This, I believe, is what he intends to establish in *Dorian Gray*. Certainly not rejecting aestheticism but redefining it as a principle that can function only within carefully circumscribed moral boundaries, Wilde repudiates the manifesto with which Pater opened the *Renaissance* and makes his way, I want to argue, back to an Arnoldian concept of the function and purpose of art. Wilde was a great admirer of Arnold's and said so, for instance, to Helena Sickert, the popular

[10] Ellman, p. 316.

writer and sufragette, on presenting her with the gift of a volume of Arnold's poems (*Letters*, p. 60). And he must have meant what he said, for during his darkest hours in prison, he asked for those poems to be mailed to him (*Letters*, p. 416 n.). When he published his own first verses, he sent them to Arnold as a tribute, adding a letter in which he expressed how greatly he held him in esteem (*Letters*, p. 78). Poet, critic, creator of taste, Wilde in many ways must have felt he was assuming Arnold's mantle. Pater had felt much the same way, hence his opening allusion to the man he thought at least he was destined to replace. Certainly, the original title of Wilde's essay 'The Critic as Artist' – 'The True Function and Value of Criticism' – echoes the title of Arnold's lectures 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time', delivered in 1864, long before Wilde arrived at Oxford, but undoubtedly a legend he could not but have wished to rival.[11]

The principle to which Wilde returns is perhaps the very basis of Arnold's canonical position, namely that the function of art, as Arnold put it in 1880 in *The Study of Poetry*, is to be a 'criticism of life'.[12] Arnold means "criticism" etymologically. Art is a means of judging life, a means of measuring reality against the standard of the ideal, and of altering it accordingly. It is, in essence, the view that Shelley had expressed in *The Defense of Poetry* when he had designated the poet the unacknowledged legislator of the world. Life, reality are flawed. And after Darwin if not before, so, in the deepest sense, is nature. The artist is that being who, by the power of imagination, is able to conceive those truths in whose image life may be shaped. Wilde suggests his Arnoldian view in his novel in two ways. First, the portrait is itself a perfect instance of this principle. It passes judgment on Dorian's life. Dorian himself sees it this way, calling the painting that 'terrible portrait whose changing features' serve to show him 'the real degradation of his life' (*Works*, p. 111). Second, exactly as Wilde intends to circumscribe the aesthetic life by placing it within moral limits, the novel encloses the life of an aesthete in the frame of a morality play, therefore within the moral limits of that medieval form. The structure of the novel, thus, 'criticizes' the tale it tells.

The very fact that Wilde encloses his narrative in a medieval genre is a repudiation of Pater who, in the subject and title both of *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, had rejected the Middle Ages, urging his readers to embrace, as he had stated it in his 'Preface', the absolute antithesis that characterized the Renaissance, with its 'care for physical

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[11] And if Apryl L.D. Heath is right – in his 'An Unnoted Allusion to Matthew Arnold in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*', *Notes & Queries*, 35.3 (233) (1988), 332, – there is in the very text of the novel an acknowledgment of the master.

[12] Arnold, IX, 163.

beauty, the worship of the body', the very 'breaking down of those limits which the religious system of the middle age imposed on the heart and the imagination'.[13] A similar attack may be found on the medieval period on the pages of *Dorian Gray*. '"I believe"', Lord Henry comments, '"that if one man were to live out his life fully and completely, were to give form to every feeling, expression to every thought, reality to every dream – I believe that the world would gain such a fresh impulse of joy that we would forget all the maladies of mediaevalism, and return to the Hellenic ideal – to something finer, richer, than the Hellenic ideal"' (*Works*, p. 29). This opposition between the Hellenic and medieval view of life is itself an Arnoldian dichotomy,[14] one that, in *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold insists we must reconcile, as, in a sense, Wilde is doing himself through the relationship between the content and the form of his book. For Lord Henry's view of this period is not by any means Oscar Wilde's. Wilde knew the Middle Ages well and it is of special importance to the thesis of my essay that he was also a great lover of medieval literature: Thomas à Kempis, St. Augustine, and, beyond all others, Dante, to name only a few of the authors he habitually read, read and took comfort from, apparently, for, as his letters indicate, he continually asked for these to be sent to him in prison.

The tale itself is medieval, concerned as it is with sin and guilt, conscience and moral retribution, and, although it is obviously set in the period in which it is written – indeed, its modernity is important, as I shall shortly hope to show – Wilde is intent on keeping our thoughts on the medieval world. He often refers to those writers, for instance, he liked to read himself from the period. Dorian is said, at one juncture, thus, to appear to many young men 'to be of the company of those whom Dante describes as having sought to "make themselves perfect by the worship of beauty"' (*Works*, p. 103). Such a comment places Dorian virtually in Dante's Hell, literarily in the ultimate paradigm passing moral judgment. Allusions to medieval genres also keep the age before us. As Dorian, for instance, reads the book by which he thinks he is corrupted, he hardly knows, the narrator comments recalling the genre of the saint's life, whether he's reading 'the ecstasies of some mediaeval saint or the [...] confessions of a modern sinner' (*Works*, p. 101). The fact that all the major characters are said to have attended Oxford – Basil, Dorian, and Lord Henry – serves the same historical purpose. Wilde, of course, went to Oxford himself, but

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[13] Pp. xxii–xxiii.

[14] Further discussion of the relationship of Hebraism and Hellenism in the novel can be found in Jan B. Gordon, 'Hebraism, Hellenism, and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*', *Die Neueren Sprachen*, 15 (1966), 324–32.

that is not why he takes the trouble to introduce the university so prominently in his book. Oxford, in the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, was more a metaphor than a place, the very image, as Matthew Arnold had put it in 1865 in his 'Preface' to *Essays in Criticism, First Series*, of 'the last enchantments of the Middle Age'. Thomas Hardy makes use of this image, quoting from this very 'Preface', in his novel *Jude the Obscure* (Part II, Chapter 1) published very shortly after *The Picture of Dorian Gray* appeared, and Max Beerbohm, Wilde's good friend, quoting also from Arnold's 'Preface', invokes it still in 1911 in the opening paragraph of his novel *Zuleika Dobson*. There is no question Wilde is using Oxford in this symbolic way. The physician, Alan Campbell, a scientist, therefore a modern man, is said to have gone not to Oxford but Cambridge (*Works*, p. 127). Lord Henry, of course, makes a crucial distinction in the very novel itself between medieval art, which is '"charming"', and what he calls '"medieval emotions"', which he considers '"out of date"'. Of the latter, he grants '"one can use them in fiction. . . . But then the only things that one can use in fiction are the things that one has ceased to use in fact"' (*Works*, p. 69). It is important to note, however, that it is the medieval rather than Lord Henry's view that is realized in the book.

Dorian Gray is not the only work in which Oscar Wilde invokes the frame of a medieval genre. In a more ironic relationship to the paradigm of its form, *Salomé*, I would suggest, is essentially a miracle play. Both of these works are aware of themselves as literary artifacts in an historical tradition. As Dorian, for example, wonders what he's inherited from his forebears, he comments reflexively on his character: 'one had ancestors', he remarks, 'in literature, as well as in one's own race' (*Works*, p. 113). Often Wilde calls our attention to the family tree of each trope. When Dorian makes up his mind to reform, the girl he determines to spare, after planning to seduce her, is given the name of Hetty Merton (*Works*, p. 165), a name that cannot fail to remind us of Hetty Sorrel in *Adam Bede* who is seduced by Arthur Donnithorne. The fact that the woman Dorian delivers from his own rapacious clutches is offered as a generic character shifts the attention from the action to more artifactual questions concerning the making of the book, therefore to the question of art.[15]

The form of the medieval morality play subsumes everything in the novel: the action, the characters, the imagery. Joseph W. Barley has demonstrated that this medieval genre, having virtually disappeared

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[15] A different perspective on the uses of reflexivity in Wilde is offered by Douglas Robillard, Jr., in 'Self-Reflexive Art and Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*', *Essays in Arts and Sciences*, 18 (1989), 29–38.

after the latter Middle Ages, suddenly enjoyed a revival in the early 1900's.[16] Wilde is reviving it even earlier. He, to be sure, is writing a novel, but he only in part abandons the dramatic form of the genre. He was a dramatist, after all, and a good deal of the novel seems to have been conceived dramatically.[17] The action proceeds through dialogue chiefly and the character of the dialogue is almost classical in nature, strongly resembling the stichomythy of the Greek stage Wilde loved so well. The following is a typical instance:

> 'What of Art?' she asked.
> 'It is a malady.'
> 'Love?'
> 'An illusion.'
> 'Religion?'
> 'The fashionable substitute for Belief.'
> 'You are a sceptic.'
> 'Never! Scepticism is the beginning of Faith' (*Works*, p. 149).

Wilde might well have written a play out of the matter of this narrative. The reason he chose to write a novel – and this, we recall, was his only novel, a fact that requires an explanation, and not the usual one which argues that he simply disliked long tasks – is that it was the dominant form. In this work, he saw himself as the artistic voice of his age and he wanted to address it in its characteristic idiom.

Allegory, in the subjective and relativistic Decadence, had been rapidly disappearing. But if he was to reestablish a moral ideal on the basis of which art could hope to criticize life, Wilde had no choice but to reclaim it. Maria Edelson has shown that Wilde is often allegorical in his fantasies and fairy tales.[18] Although in a far less obvious way, *Dorian* is his deepest allegory. A similar allegory exists in a tale to which, I believe, Wilde is indebted for his plot. Many works have been suggested as the origin of this narrative: Disraeli's *Vivien Grey*, Balzac's *La peau de chagrin*, Meinhold's *Sidonia*, Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and William Sharp's *Children-of-To-morrow*, not to mention *A Rebours* and the novels of Edmond Goncourt whose fiction Wilde admired immensely (*Letters*, pp. 144–45). Elements of

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[16] 'The Morality Motive in Contemporary English Drama' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1911).

[17] Patrice Hannon makes a good case for the place of the theatrical in the language of *Dorian Gray*. See his 'Theatre and Theory in the Language of *Dorian Gray*', *Victorian Literature and* Culture, 19 (1991), 143–66.

[18] 'The Language of Allegory in Oscar Wilde's Tales', *Anglo-Irish and Irish Literature: Aspects of Language and Culture*, ed. by Birgit Bramsback and Martin Croghan (Uppsala: Uppsala University Press, 1988), pp. 165–171.

these, undoubtedly, and many others found their way into the concept of the novel. And tales of young men exchanging their souls for eternal youth and beauty were a cliché at the end of the century.[19] But none provides as precise a parallel as an incident in a novel written by Edward Bulwer-Lytton published in 1862 and entitled *A Strange Story*. Bulwer-Lytton was one of the earliest novelists to use the occult in his allegorical tales, and in this novel, whose central argument is the inadequacy of materialism as a philosophic ground on which to reconceive a world that had conceptually disintegrated, the protagonist, Alan Fenwick, comes to have a strange relationship with a character named Margrave. Something of a Wandering Jew, a figure enormously popular through the entire nineteenth century, Margrave, while he looks young enough (Chapter 25), seems to have lived through untold centuries. One day Fenwick is put in a trance in which he is given special powers to see beyond the empirical realm. 'I saw before me', he observes, as he peruses Margrave's features,

> 'the still rigid form of Margrave, and my sight seemed, with ease, to penetrate through its covering of flesh, and to survey the mechanism of the whole interior being; [...] gradually, [...] the form and face on which I looked changed from the exuberant youth into infirm old age. The discoloured, wrinkled skin, the bleared, dim eye, the flaccid muscles, the brittle, sapless bones. Nor was the change that of age alone; the expression of the countenance had passed into gloomy discontent, and in every furrow a passion or a vice had sown the seeds of grief. [...] The brain now opened on my sight. [...] I saw therein a moral world, charred and ruined. [...] The powers abused to evil had been originally of rare order; imagination and scope; the energies that dare; the faculties that discover. But the moral part of the brain had failed to dominate the mental. Defective veneration of what is good or great; cynical disdain of what is right and just; in fine, a great intellect, first misguided, then perverted, and now falling with the decay of the body into ghastly but imposing ruins' (Chapter. 32).

Much like Bulwer, Wilde constructs his allegorical narrative by the use of religious language, often the language commonly used in medieval literature, but which the characters, having lost the moral significance of these terms, speak in a casual, meaningless, way. Words like "sin", "temptation", "judgement" appear and reappear in the book, frequently without the user being aware of their moral history. Sometimes Wilde threads a single word through the entire length of the novel with incremental significance. 'Scarlet', for instance, whose

[19] Henry Proctor's *Perpetual Youth* and James Clark Bennett's *Shedding the Years* are two examples of such novels.

Biblical meaning is not always negative but which came to be associated, undoubtedly through the Whore of Babylon in the Book of Revelations, with, as John the Divine describes it, moral 'filth and abomination', begins as the colour of Dorian's lips (*Works*, p. 31), is given moral definition by Lord Henry when, in a witticism, he remarks that in the '"sombre"' costume of the nineteenth century '"sin"' is '"the only [...] colour"' left (*Works*, p. 36), expresses the growing relationship between Dorian and Lord Henry when the former is said to flower, under the guidance of the latter, into 'blossoms of scarlet flame' (*Works*, p. 54), finally to become the colour of the spot on Dorian's hand when the painting chronicles Dorian's brutal murder of Basil (*Works*, p. 166). Invariably, at critical moments, characters utter the very words a protagonist would have used in a medieval allegory, the most telling being the moment, at the beginning of the novel, in which Dorian, expressing his wish that the portrait age for him, says '"I would give my soul for that!"' (*Works*, p. 34), words by which he only means to give emphasis to his speech but which, allegorically, indicate his willingness to strike a bargain with the devil. There is intentional irony in the fact that the allegorical meanings of statements such as these depend on their literal signification while their modern usage rests on their metaphoric sense. Wilde is making a substantive point, namely that in the modern world words which in the Middle Ages stood for our relationship to divine and ultimate ends have, as literal assertions, lost their ontological status.

Remarks like the one above of Dorian's remind us continually in the narrative that, as its subject, the novel takes exactly the subject of the morality play: the life of man, the fate of the soul. Dorian does sell his soul to the devil. Wilde himself explained to the editor of the *Daily Chronicle* in which the book had been attacked that this compact had been among his earliest concepts for the novel (*Letters*, p. 263). This theme indeed is so important that Wilde feels the need to keep restating it and not with his usual subtlety: '"There goes the devil's bargain"', Wilde has a woman cry, for instance, when she spots Dorian in an opium-den (*Works*, p. 144).

As in the morality play, the drama proceeds through abstract characters, figures that stand for general types, Dorian being the Everyman who gives his name to the most famous and last instance of the genre. Many have seen him as a Faust,[20] and he is that in part as well, but Wilde suggests what he is thinking when he names his character Gray. The common view has always been that Wilde chose

[20] Ellman, for instance (p. 315), and Dominick Rossi in his 'Paralles in Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Goethe's *Faust*', *College Language Association Journal*, 13 (1969), 188–91.

this name to flatter John Gray, a handsome young man who had aspirations of becoming a writer himself (and published some pieces in *The Dial*) and whom Wilde met in the late Eighties. Gray appears to have shared this view for he often signed himself 'Dorian' in his letters to Oscar Wilde.[21] But, while he did not seem averse to letting John Gray think what he liked, Wilde was too good, too serious, an artist to use his novel as sexual bait. There are many names in the novel whose meanings, as in morality plays, fix the characters allegorically. An obvious instance is Lady Agatha, Lord Henry's aunt whose name means "good" and whose function in the novel is to represent good works, a cause to which she is devoted (*Works*, p. 26). And good works, we might remember, in the character of Good Deeds, is a central figure in *Everyman*, being the only one who is willing – unlike Cousin, Kindred, Fellowship, and above all Worldly Goods – to go with Everyman to his grave, where, the implications is, he will plead for his salvation. As Everyman does until the end, Dorian also rejects Good Deeds. Planning at first to help Lady Agatha with her work in the East End (*Works*, p. 27) – the most destitute section of London – Dorian quickly forgets his promise under the influence of Lord Henry (*Works*, p. 27). Dorian is Gray because he is neutral at the beginning of the novel. We meet him at the threshold of life, still in the bloom of 'youth's' first 'purity', as yet 'unspotted' by 'the world' (*Works*, p. 27). He is neither white nor black, in those traditional connotations. But the potential for both is in him and Dorian is Gray in that sense too, capable of good and evil, although committed to neither yet. '"Each of us"', as Dorian says, '"has a Heaven and Hell in him"' (*Works*, p. 159). In both these senses, the name Gray has a long Victorian history – and it is important here to remind ourselves that Wilde does not spring unprecedented on the scene of English fiction, that he is not only the heir of the nineteenth-century novel but, and not only chronologically, part of that tradition himself: Cytherea and Owen Graye in Thomas Hardy's *Desperate Remedies*; Frank and Lizzie Greystock in Anthony Trollope's *The Eustace Diamonds*; John Grey in *Can You Forgive Her?*; and the title character in Disraeli's *Vivien Grey*, to name a few of the prominent instances.

The pivotal point in the morality play, namely the moment in which the protagonist chooses the path that will seal his destiny, is also the pivotal point of the novel. It occurs after Sibyl's suicide, when Wilde has Dorian explicitly say that he feels the time has come for him to make a decisive choice (*Works*, p. 87). This moment, moreover, lays the foundation for the novel to reclaim another convention of the morality play. In the typological way in which medieval allegory takes

[21] See Ellman, p. 308.

all subsequent events as replications of Biblical paradigms, Everyman in making this choice is seen as an incarnation of Adam facing his archetypal temptation. Wilde reconstructs that Biblical narrative. The whole of the novel reenacts it and the opening scene prefigures it, beginning indoors but quickly moving outdoors into Basil's 'garden' where, as he listens to Lord Henry, Dorian faces his 'temptation' (*Works*, p. 18), a temptation to which he surrenders, he later realizes, in 'pride' (*Works*, p. 160).

Like the medieval morality play, which uses the Edenic paradigm to stress that every human being relives that universal tale, the novel clearly wants to address the eternal human condition. But morality plays are sometimes concerned not only with the eternal but with the form eternal questions assume in their own specific time. Thus in *Mankind* there is one character, called appropriately Now-A-Days, who not only represents those who live in the here and now but in the present of the play, about 1475, in which this character's manner of thinking is held to be the modern way. Wilde does something very similar. Acutely conscious of his age as an historical circumstance, Wilde considers how the eternal reveals itself in modern form. The adjective 'modern' is attached to every important noun in the novel. The narrator speaks of 'modern times', 'modern life', the 'modern ideal', 'modern art', 'modern romance', and above all 'modern morality'. Dorian, although an eternal Everyman, is thus also typically modern. '"You are the type",' Lord Henry tells him, "'of what the age is searching for, and what it is afraid it has found"' (*Works*, p. 217). The picture too has this double character. '"My dear fellow"', Lord Henry tells Basil on first studying the portrait. '"It is the finest portrait of modern times"' (*Works*, p. 33). The words are deliberately ambiguous. It is either the finest portrait that has been painted in modern times or the finest representation of the character of the period.

This ambiguity is obvious in every element of the allegory and most significantly in the battle, waged in the morality play by God and Satan for man's soul, fought in the novel by their surrogates, Basil Hallward and Lord Henry. Both tend to speak as though their words had, beside their immediate meanings, a preternatural significance. '"I have known everything"', says Lord Henry in one characteristic instance, 'with a tired look in his eyes' (*Works*, p. 70), as though he has lived from time immemorial and, like the devil, seen all things.[22]

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[22] Robert André – in 'Oscar Wilde et Lucifer', *Nouvelle Revuew Française*, 14 (1967), 1072–77 – and Madame Eusebi – in 'The Devil in *Dorian Gray*', *Mythes, Croyances et Religions dans le Monde Anglo Saxon*, 5 (1987), 85–89 – comment on some other aspects of the devil in *Dorian Gray*.

His 'smoking' (*Works*, p. 18) is meant to serve the same purpose, being a common Victorian way of identifying the devil. In *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, we recall, another of the novels Hardy published soon after *Dorian Gray*, the first time Tess encounters Alec – the man who on the surface at least plays the diabolical role – he is smoking a cigar (Chapter 5). Wilde is even more patently obvious, setting the moment, as we have seen, of Dorian's first meeting with Lord Henry in the garden of Basil's home, thus identifying the latter as the archetypal tempter, the Vice of the morality play.

Keeping strictly to the paradigms of his medieval form, Wilde maintains the traditional triad of the world, the flesh, and the devil – a triad represented as characters in another morality play, *The Castle of Perseverance* – in his development of Lord Henry. Thus, for example, at a dinner party, a woman flirting with Lord Henry tells him she is not '"surprized"' to find the '"the world"' considers him '"wicked"'. '"But what world is that?"' Lord Henry inquires. '"It can only be the next world. This world and I are on excellent terms"' (*Works*, p. 136). And of this worldliness the translation in modern times is materialism, both the materialism Victorians often attacked as Mammonism as well as the philosophic materialism that had reduced their conceptual realm to little more than atoms and molecules. A year before he had written *Dorian*, Wilde had denounced just such materialism in writing about the United States. 'The crude commercialism of America', he had observed in 'The Decay of Lying', 'its materialising spirit, its indifference to the poetical side of things, and its lack of imagination and of high unattainable ideals, are entirely due to the country having adopted for its national hero a man who, according to his own confession, was incapable of telling a lie' (*Works*, p. 980). In *Dorian Gray* Wilde also denounces the mechanism entailed in materialism through which the modern world has lost all comprehension of awe and wonder. '"I have grown to love secrecy"', Basil Hallward remarks at one point. '"It seems to be the one thing that can made modern life mysterious or marvelous to us"' (*Works*, p. 20). Of this secular, physical universe Lord Henry is both the creation and the allegorical likeness. '"What"', he asks Dorian, '"have you or I to do with the superstitions of our age? No: we have given up our belief in the soul"' (*Works*, pp. 161–62). A telling exchange occurs when Basil explains to Lord Henry he has put too much of himself into the painting to be able to exhibit it. Lord Henry tells him he is too vain. '"I really can't see any resemblance between you [...] and this young Adonis"' (*Works*, p. 19). This misunderstanding of Basil, one of the many wonderful bits of psychological characterization which rests on the way in which the mind reads its own thoughts into the world, blatantly demonstrates the bias of Lord Henry's point of view.

Belonging to the material world, he cannot grasp that Basil means he has put his heart and soul not his face into the picture. Surface is Lord Henry's creed. '"It is only shallow people who do not judge"', he says, '"by appearances. The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible"' (*Works*, p. 32).

As is often the case in the novel, Lord Henry hits on a partial truth and Wilde allows him to develop it, as the devil often will, in a subtle sophistic argument:

> 'soul and body, body and soul – how mysterious they were! There was animalism in the soul, and the body had its moments of spirituality. The senses could refine, and the intellect could degrade. Who could say where the fleshly impulse ceased, or the physical impulse began? How shallow were the arbitrary definitions of ordinary psychologists! And yet how difficult to divide between the claims of the various schools! Was the soul a shadow seated in the house of sin? Or was the body really in the soul, as Giordano Bruno thought? The separation of spirit from matter was a mystery, and the union of spirit with matter was a mystery also' (*Works*, p. 56).

Falling prey to Lord Henry's influence, Dorian takes these thoughts further yet: the

> 'worship of the senses has often, and with much justice, been decried. [...] But it appeared to Dorian Gray that the true nature of the senses had never been understood, and that they had remained savage and animal merely because the world had sought to starve them into submission or to kill them by pain, instead of aiming at making them elements of a new spirituality, of which a fine instinct for beauty was to be the dominant characteristic' (*Works*, p. 104).

What makes this argument partially true is that this is Paterian aestheticism. It is still a temptation to Wilde. But in the novel he places these thoughts, a fictional version of the typical match in the morality play between the body and the soul, in the allegorical context of a debate between virtue and pleasure, between salvation and damnation.

In medieval allegory, the devil tempts humankind by lying. By definition Himself the truth, God and his messengers do not lie. They speak to us without deceit on what is needed for salvation. The only way the devil can work his wicked ways on the human mind is by rank prevarication. In the modern world, however, it is morality that lies, a lie in Wilde's own sense of the word in 'The Decay of Lying', for instance. It is a human fabrication, a truth, that is, not of reality but of the human imagination. In the medieval world, it is Satan who embodies, as the word itself suggests, the pandemonium of moral

anarchy. In the modern, a secular world in which there is not only no deity but no overarching order conferring meaning on the universe, 'chaos', as Dorian realizes, is to be found in 'Actual life' (*Works*, p. 151). And nothing is more completely meaningless, in the chaos of actual life, than its lack of moral order. 'In the common world of fact the wicked', Dorian declares, 'were not punished, nor the good rewarded'. 'It was the imagination that set remorse to dog the feet of sin' (*Works*, p. 151).

Lord Henry represents that chaos by which the actual is characterized. About the world of matter and fact he never speaks what is not the truth. That is why he is so compelling, such a vital, original force. In one important sense it is he who is the scientist of the novel, far more so than Alan Campbell, who is only a physician, working on the human body. For Lord Henry, all humankind is a clinical laboratory. 'He had been always enthralled by the methods of natural science; but the ordinary subject-matter of that science had seemed to him trivial and of no import. And so he had begun by vivisecting himself, as he had ended by vivisecting others. Human life – that appeared to him the one thing worth investigating' (*Works*, p. 55). Like a scientist, he is dedicated to the 'experimental method' which he considers ideally suited to conduce to 'fruitful results' in his search to analyze the genesis of human passion (*Works*, p. 56).

But he is also the novel's aesthete. Nearly every aestheticism articulated in the narrative is articulated by Lord Henry. Linda Dowling, for this reason, takes him to be the embodiment of that aesthetic aristocracy in which she holds Wilde put his faith.[23] And his repartées, his witticisms, his paradoxes, do indeed sometimes sound like Oscar Wilde. A part of Wilde must have enjoyed expressing itself through Lord Henry's dialogue. But it is interesting that Wilde, in that letter in which he grants that he is Basil and Dorian both, does not see himself as Lord Henry. Lord Henry, he comments in that letter, is only 'what the world thinks he is' (*Letters*, p. 352). It may seem strange that the novel's aesthete should be so scientific a man, but one of the most remarkable insights on the pages of *Dorian Gray* is Wilde's extraordinary recognition that, in a strange and unlikely way, aestheticism and science are one. Both seek knowledge that is derived only through the use of the senses; both are morally neutral pursuits experimenting through the senses. Lord Henry is a total relativist. In an implicit answer to Shakespeare's provocative question 'What's in a name?' Lord Henry, in a postmodern notion of ontological realities, answers that a name is merely the category under which we have chosen to classify, also in a postmodern view of the entire linguistic

[23] P. 95.

venture, the thing to which we have assigned it. '"Names are everything"', he says. '"I never quarrel with actions. My one quarrel is with words"' (*Works*, p. 147). There is nothing good or bad, Lord Henry might be taken to say with another Shakespearean character. Only naming makes it so.

Lord Henry is therefore also amoral. His witty cynicisms express a view of the world which grants no place to classifications of right and wrong. '"I never approve, or disapprove"', he breezily remarks to Basil. '"It is an absurd attitude to take towards life. We are not sent into the world to air our moral prejudices"' (*Works*, p. 66). When Basil speaks of conscience and cowardice, seeking to make a distinction between them, Lord Henry insists they '"are really the same"'. '"Conscience is the trade name of the firm. That is all"' (*Works*, p. 22). As one guest remarks at Lady Agatha's, where he has been invited to dinner, Lord Henry is '"charmingly [...] demoralizing"' (*Works*, p. 45). This is another of those words that function differently in the literal and in the allegorical narrative, meaning little at the surface except that the guest is pleasantly shocked at Lord Henry's witty remarks, but meaning exactly what it says at the allegorical level. Lord Henry simply negates morality. A critical moment on this point occurs when Lord Henry cautions Dorian not to allow himself to be drawn into joining Lady Agatha in her good works at the East End. They will '"squander the gold of"' your '"days"' (*Works*, p. 32). He is urging Dorian, that is, to abandon those Good Deeds that alone can guarantee Everyman a place in heaven.

This contrast, however, between the character and the frame in which he is placed is an historical contrast too. In both his science and his aestheticism, Lord Henry is a modern man. Seducing Dorian to his views, he seduces him to the modern. That is one of the reasons Dorian is so easy to seduce. The medieval Everyman, even when he chose to do evil, knew the meaning of right and wrong. The modern Everyman does not. The difference here is between the immoral and the, considerably worse, amoral. The latter entices us not to evil, to which we have always been enticeable, but to the loss of the ability to distinguish right from wrong. Dorian begins with real moral instincts. He has the wisdom at the beginning to be 'afraid' of committing a sin (*Works*, p. 31). When he hears Lord Henry speak of living '"fully and completely"', giving '"form to every feeling"', '"reality to every dream"' (*Works*, p. 29), he senses that something is deeply wrong. '"Stop!"' he cries, trying to silence him. And it is just what he ought to say, a version of 'Get thee behind me, Satan!' But even to himself he cannot formulate what the problem is. You '"bewilder me"', he confesses. '"I don't know what to say. There is some answer to you, but I cannot find it. Don't speak. Let me think. Or, rather, let me try

not to think"'(*Works*, p. 29). Born to an age in which even morality is seen as relative and subjective, he is no longer capable of knowing evil when he sees it.

As D. H. Lawrence would have said, the body is the new religion. When that debate between body and soul common to the morality play is reenacted in Dorian's mind under the forces of modernism, Dorian can only make one choice. Looking at Basil's portrait of him, he thinks of his beauty and of its brevity. 'The life that was to make his soul would mar his body', he reflects (*Works*, p. 34). It is under the spell of this moment that he makes his fatal wish to let the portrait age in his place. His words – '"I would give my soul for that!"' (*Works*, p. 34) – although not only allegorical but the formulaic words of the deadliest transaction in the medieval world – carry, as we have seen already, very little meaning for him. As a modern Everyman, for him not the soul but the body is real. It is this that is the foundation of Lord Henry's hedonism (*Works*, p. 32). Lawrence was happy in this new creed, which, of course, he interpreted differently. Wilde is a more conventional moralist. For him, although not unattractive, it is a dangerous doctrine still. It urges the cultivation of freedom, regardless of the moral price. '"We are punished for our refusals. Every impulse that we strive to strangle broods in the mind and poisons us"'. It urges the cultivation of self. '"The aim of life is self-development"', Lord Henry preaches to Dorian Gray. The '"highest of all duties"', he argues, unaware of the paradox inhering in his very words, '"is the duty [...] to one's self"' (*Works*, p. 29).

What makes aestheticism so dangerous is that, as Wilde well understands, it is a creed that cannot be held without being simultaneously implemented in life as fully as in art. Dorian can hardly tell the difference. 'Life itself', he thinks to himself, 'is the first, the greatest, of the arts' (*Works*, p. 132). Many Victorians would have agreed. In a world that had turned to chaos, order could only be made by art, whether in fiction or in life. In *The Study of Poetry*, Matthew Arnold himself had pronounced that poetry would in time to come replace both philosophy and religion.[24] And by 'poetry' he had meant, using the word etymologically, the act of making, of creation. Poetry had seemed to him to have so immeasurable a future because, since the world had come apart, all things required to be made. Life, the self, reality, were all essentially works of art. But art in this sense was a Shelleyean enterprise, the creation in the world of the ideal the mind had perceived. Lord Henry's art is something else, based – so one with science again – not on a vision of the ideal but on a consent to the real, not on what should be but on what is.

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[24] *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*, IX, 162.

This, at least, is one reality, the reality of empiricism. There is another in the novel, a reality explored in the actress Sibyl Vane and in Dorian's relationship to her. Strictly speaking, on his part, there is no genuine relationship. Filtering all his perceptions and feelings through aesthetic categories, Dorian forms an association not with Sibyl but with the roles he has seen her portray on stage. '"You said to me that Sibyl Vane represented to you", says Lord Henry, "all the heroines of romance – that she was Desdemona one night, and Ophelia the other; that if she died as Juliet, she came to life as Imogen"' (*Works*, p. 86). It is not a mere figure of speech that Dorian, describing her to Lord Henry, says that '"one evening she *is* Rosalind"', another '"she *is* Imogen"' (*Works*, p. 51; italics mine). The verb 'to be' is exactly right. Sibyl, for Dorian, does not enact these romantic heroines. For him, she is the parts she plays. Only through them can he conceive her. And this is still true after she dies. 'Poor Sibyl!' he utters on being told she had committed suicide. 'What a *romance* it had all been! She had often mimicked death on the stage. Then Death himself had [...] taken her. [...] How had she *played* that dreadful last scene?' (*Works*, p. 87; italics mine). Sibyl's relationship to Dorian is offered as the antithesis. Many have assumed her name was meant as a homonym for 'Vain'. But there is nothing vain in Sibyl. Rather, she is a weather vane, a norm, a standard, provided for us against which to measure Dorian's views. Sibyl is an artist also, '"a born artist"', Dorian says (*Works*, p. 67). That is what attracts him to her. And she too begins by seeing him not as a man but as a part. She calls him 'Prince Charming' and, as Dorian rightly reports her to Lord Henry, '"regards"' him initially as no more than '"a person in a play"' (*Works*, p. 53). But then she falls in love with him. Here, it may be that Wilde is exhibiting the sentimentality we know he is sometimes capable of. But he may also be availing himself of a common Victorian trope to stress a new and important point, namely that the moment she loves is the moment she loses her art (*Works*, p. 73). Before '"I knew you"', she explains, '"acting was the only reality of my life. It was only in the theatre that I lived. [...] I knew nothing but shadows, and I thought them real. . . . You taught me what reality really is. To-night, for the first time in my life, I saw through the hollowness, the sham, the silliness of the empty pageant in which I had always played. [...] You had brought me something higher, something of which all art is but a reflection. You had made me understand what love really is"' (*Works*, pp. 74–75). These, of course, are Platonic words. Wilde's acquaintance with Plato's thought is well attested historically, as in the Commonplace Book he kept while at Oxford, for example,[25] as well as

[25] See Ellman, p. 41.

in the novel itself. Before she fell in love with Dorian, Sibyl is saying, she lived in the cave, taking the shadows for that reality represented by the Forms. Love has taught her to distinguish between the truth of those ideals and their copies in the world. This is virtually the 'Symposium', an essay we know Wilde knew very well,[26] in which the love of another being serves as the path to a recognition and a love of the ideal. Critical to this amazing speech is the point, of which Sibyl herself is the dramatic manifestation, that art is mere shadow and passes away the moment genuine truth is grasped. This is not to say that Wilde subscribes to Plato's view of art as a twice inferior image of the reality of the philosopher, but – and the woman, let us remember, who represents it is named Sibyl, priestess of transcendent truths – in insisting on this distinction between that reality and art, he is rejecting mere aestheticism as a tenable ground for life.

Wilde, in fact, goes even further, associating genuine art not only with Platonic Forms but specifically with Christ, therefore with Christianity. When the narrator refers to Lord Henry's 'poisonous theories that in Basil Hallward's garden had first stirred' in Dorian's mind 'the passion for impossible things' (*Works*, p. 79), Wilde connects aestheticism with the temptation of the serpent. But here, very much as in the morality play, the serpent is also the Anti-Christ. Sitting with Basil in that garden in which the temptation is to take place, Lord Henry leans over to pick a daisy which he begins 'pulling [...] to bits' (*Works*, p. 22). Typical of the Decadent style, the opening chapter focuses on a wealth of sensory detail, especially on the scent of flowers, but it is obvious, here as elsewhere, that Wilde is well aware of the meanings of flowers in medieval allegory. Popular in the fifteenth century, in particular in Dutch art, in paintings of the 'Adoration', the daisy symbolizes the Christ Child. The act of pulling it apart – while it also reenacts, in keeping with the vegetation myths alluded to throughout the novel, the *sparagmos* of the fertility god – serves, in the medieval fashion that sees Satanic rituals as parodies of Christian rites (as, for example, in the Black Mass), as a mockery of the Eucharist. But Christ, for Wilde, is more than a deity. He is a rival concept of art. In one of his most extraordinary letters, written from prison to Alfred Douglas over a period of several months early in 1897, Wilde says of Christ that 'he ranks with the poets', for He realized, Wilde explains, 'in the entire sphere of human relations that imaginative sympathy which in the sphere of Art is the sole secret of creation' (*Letters*, pp. 476–77). Lord Henry, we are pointedly told, is completely devoid of sympathy. '"I can sympathize"', he remarks, in one of the many delightful paradoxes which hinge on our being able

[26] See Ellman, p. 88.

to recognize the etymologies of the words, '"with everything, except suffering"' (*Works*, p. 44). As the Anti-Christ, Lord Henry is the antithesis of true art.[27]

Basil Hallward, who is described as a 'contrast' to Lord Henry (*Works*, p. 28), is clearly his allegorical opposite. If Lord Henry stands for the devil, Basil stands in the place of God. This is suggested in his name. Many have held that *Dorian Gray* was conceived when Basil Ward, a well-known artist of the period, painting a portrait of Oscar Wilde, happened to say it would be delightful if it were the painting that aged while the sitter remained the same, and that Wilde acknowledged that fact by naming his painter Basil Hallward.[28] Certainly the similarity in the names is not insignificant. But Basil, from the Greek for 'king', was a very popular name in the nineteenth-century novel for characters meant as the King of Heaven. Many of these, in a secular age in which creation had fallen to art, were, like Basil – called 'the artist' as though it were his epithet (*Works*, p. 18) – one kind of artist or another: Basil Morton, for example, the writer in George Gissing's *The Whirlpool* and the title character of Wilkie Collins's novel *Basil*, both of them not only artists but used to function in that role in the thematic points of these stories. There is an allegorical edge to nearly every situation in which Basil finds himself, especially in relation to Dorian. '"You are the one man in the world"', Dorian for example tells him, '"who is entitled to know everything about me"' (*Works*, p. 120). When Basil lectures him on his activities, itself an allegorical act, Dorian angrily demands to know 'what right had Basil to have spoken to him as he had done? who had made him a judge over others?' (*Works*, p. 141). It is, we recall, in Basil's garden that Lord Henry first tempts Dorian. And the quarrel between the two in the novel's opening scene over Dorian's destiny reenacts the allegorical conflict between God and Satan in and over the soul of man.

Basil's aesthetic, in opposition to the views Lord Henry holds, is both religious and Platonic. Speaking with admiration of Sibyl as Dorian has described her to him in her performances on the stage, Basil declares that to '"spiritualize one's age – that is something worth doing"' (*Works*, p. 71). What attracts him to Dorian Gray is that

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[27] On other aspects of Oscar Wilde's relationship to Christianity, see John Albert, O.C.S.O., 'The Christ of Oscar Wilde', *American Benedictine Review*, 39.4 (1988), 372–403; John Allen Quintus, 'Christ, Christianity, and Oscar Wilde', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 33.4 (1991), 514–27; and Guy Willoughby, 'The Marvellous Rose: Christ and the Meaning of Art in "The Nightingale and the Rose"', *English Studies in Africa: A Journal of the Humanities*, 31.2 (1988), 107–17.

[28] See Hesketh Pearson, *The Life of Oscar Wilde* (London: Methuen, 1946), p. 145.

in him he imagines the embodiment of the ideal. If there is a homosexual element in their relationship, as has been suggested by many,[29] it is again the relationship – as Wilde makes clear when he remarks that the love Basil bore Dorian was not born of the senses only, was not merely the admiration of his physical pulchritude (*Works*, p. 101) – described by Plato in the 'Symposium', in which homoerotic love is, preeminently, the means of reaching the love of the ideal. And here Wilde actually designates Plato as the source of his point of view. Referring to the artistic works he hopes to create in his new school, Basil calls them 'patterns of some other and more perfect form whose shadow they made real'. He remembered, Wilde then adds, 'something like it in history. Was it not Plato, that artist in thought, who had first analysed it?' (*Works*, p. 41). Dorian, he later repeats the point in distinctly Platonic terms, was the '"visible incarnation of that unseen ideal whose memory haunts us artists"' (*Works*, p. 93).

Not only does Wilde provide for Basil a Christian and Platonic ground for his aesthetic principles, he defines with remarkable detail the art those principles produce. Art, as Basil envisions it, denies neither the soul nor the body. Speaking of Dorian Gray again, Basil says that '"Unconsciously he defines for me the lines of a fresh school, a school that is to have in it all the passion of the romantic spirit, all the perfection of the spirit that is Greek. The harmony of soul and body – how much that is! We in our madness have separated the two, and have invented a realism that is vulgar, an ideality that is void"' (*Works*, p. 24). It is important here to note that Basil speaks of aesthetic questions in terms of philosophic ideas. Far from being its own end, art for him is plainly rooted in a philosophic position, a position that, moreover, is not only its justification but the logic of its form. The body and soul, whose harmony he thinks he has achieved in his school, is each an ontological postulate and an epistemological base before it becomes an artistic claim. The body, thus, produces realism because its focus is the material and its manner of knowing empirical, these being the underpinnings of the realistic method. Wilde had always opposed mere realism and always on these identical grounds. In 'The Decay of Lying', for instance, he excoriates English

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[29] See, for example, Ed Cohen, 'Writing Gone Wilde: Homoerotic Desire in the Closet of Representation', *PMLA* 102 (1987), 801–13; Richard Dellamora, 'Representation and Homophobia in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*', *Homosexual Themes in Literary Studies*, ed. by Wayne R. Dynes and Stephen Donaldson (New York: Garland Press, 1992), pp. 82–85; and Jeff Nunokawa, 'Homosexual Desire and the Effacement of the Self in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*', *American Imago: Studies in Psychoanalysis and Culture*, 49.3 (1992), 311–21.

fiction for its realistic bent. We 'are', he declares, 'a degraded race, and have sold our birthright for a mess of facts'. Mere ideality, however, which Wilde affiliates with the soul, is to be rejected also. What Basil is looking for is a synthesis, the harmony of the real and ideal.

Some twenty years before *Dorian Gray*, the artist of George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, Adolf Naumann, had expressed the essence of his artistic vision by saying that what he wanted to find was a means of embodying the '"idealistic in the real"' (Chapter 22). Wilde may not be thinking of *Middlemarch* but the similarity here is by no means accidental. As I have tried to show elsewhere, Eliot is simply describing here, in language typical of the century, what she too sees as the need for a synthesis of the two, both philosophically and artistically. And for her, as for the century, that synthesis is achieved in symbolism.[30] Eliot is thinking of a symbol very much as Thomas Carlyle defines the term in *Sartor Resartus* when, in a chapter entitled 'Symbols', he speaks of a symbol as the embodiment of the infinite in the finite, of the eternal in the temporal, of the spirit in the flesh. It is that 'visible incarnation' for which Basil himself is searching. Basil is aware that symbolism is his natural expression. Repeating his Platonic view that art is only a shadowing forth of the ideal the mind perceives, he speaks of his art as therefore 'symbolical' (*Works*, p. 41).

Symbolism of this kind might well have served Wilde's needs in this novel, especially since symbolic expression was the fashion of the day. *Dorian Gray* was published in fact at the height of the Symbolist movement. But the idea of the symbol had undergone a radical change since the days of Thomas Carlyle. Although in *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, published in 1899, Arthur Symons still occasionally speaks of a symbol in the old way, writing, for instance, on his first pages, that the symbolic in literature, 'in speaking to us [...] as only religion had hitherto spoken to us, [...] becomes itself a kind of religion, with all the duties and responsibilities of the sacred ritual', as a movement Symbolism was passing into something else, something evocative, impressionistic, something more designed to stir sentiment and sensibility than to recall transcendent truths. It had become a purely secular and even a purely aesthetic device. Wilde is certainly not averse to this evocative kind of symbolism, and uses it very well himself in the text of *Dorian Gray*, as, for example, in Chapter 11 in his suggestive catalogue of the associations of gems. But having lost its moral core in shedding its transcendent meaning, a

[30] A full discussion of this question can be found in my '*Middlemarch*: The Genesis of Myth in the English Novel: The Relationship Between Literary Form and the Modern Predicament', *The Notre Dame English Journal*, (1981), 107–54.

symbol is no longer capable of joining the beautiful to the good. Wilde makes a point of this himself. In contrast to Basil, who speaks of symbolism in that still religious vein, the narrator speaks of the *Symbolistes* as that school, of French conception, to which belongs that poisonous book whose influence is so deadly to Dorian (*Works*, p. 101).

Dorian is, furthermore, not the only victim of this decline in symbolism. Basil himself has suffered from it. For it is obvious that while his theories are precisely what Wilde is looking for, he himself is far from able to work them out in his own art or, indeed, in his own mind. For one thing, in contrast to Lord Henry, who sees reality very well but not the world of the ideal, Basil has a good deal of difficulty apprehending the actual. Thus, for example, he never believes that Lord Henry means what he says. '"You never say a moral thing, and you never do a wrong thing. Your cynicism is simply a pose"' (*Works*, p. 20). Lord Henry assures him he is mistaken: '"I mean everything that I have said"' (*Works*, p. 67). But Basil cannot be convinced, despite incontrovertible evidence in his influence on Dorian. Basil is wrong about Dorian too. Arriving the day after Sibyl's death, he says he called the night before to be told Dorian was at the opera. '"Of course I knew that was impossible"' (*Works*, p. 89). He cannot imagine Dorian so callous as to join his friends at the opera on the day of Sibyl's suicide. But that is just what Dorian did.

The problem is not that he lacks perception, although it finally comes to that. The problem is, rather, that morality being in Wilde's special sense a lie, Basil can only hold on to it by shutting his eyes to reality. Lord Henry says he has '"no curiosity"'. He means, of course, that Basil exhibits no passion for forbidden fruit. He neither transgresses moral boundaries nor permits himself to feel the desire to transgress them. This, indeed, is what allows him to live within a moral frame. But it is also what prevents him from apprehending the actual world. It is therefore his great virtue but '"his chief defect"' as well (*Works*, p. 160). That is why he speaks in aphorisms. Unlike Lord Henry, whose observations have the vitality of real life, being anchored in observation, Basil's always tend to clichés, being formulaic positions held in an almost dogmatic way. And even so he cannot manage to observe them in his life. Although a Platonist in theory – not unlike Thomas Mann's Gustav Aschenbach, the paradigm artist in 'Death in Venice' who first sees Tadzio as the embodiment of his own Platonic ideals (and that Mann is thinking of Plato is clear in his references to the 'Phaedrus', the dialogue that might be considered the companion to the 'Symposium' on the subject of how love leads through beauty to the Forms) but comes very soon to make him an idol to be worshipped in himself, taking the physical, that is, not as the means to

higher truth but as its own justification – Basil comes to worship Dorian. '"I worshipped you too much"', he admits when he beholds the hideous portrait on which are written Dorian's sins (*Works*, p. 122). In a materialistic age, even the artist cannot resist the power of the material world.

This is why religion is necessary. We have not sufficiently understood Oscar Wilde on this subject, I think. Undoubtedly, the romantic rituals, what Wilde himself characterized as the 'perfume of belief',[31] had, as it did for Walter Pater, an undeniable appeal. But Wilde saw also that religion was a means of keeping alive the world of mystery and passion in a materialistic era. The 'Roman ritual', he writes in the novel of Dorian Gray, 'had always a great attraction for him. The daily sacrifice, more awful really than all the sacrifices of the antique world, stirred him as much *by its superb rejection of the evidence of the senses* as by the primitive simplicity of its elements and the eternal pathos of the human tragedy that it sought to symbolize' (*Works*, p. 105; italics mine). And, as perhaps the second half of this observation suggests, religion, as an immovable ground for a concept of right and wrong, offered a basis for the morality the human tragedy required. In the novel, Dorian Gray, although he considers becoming a convert, 'never' falls into the 'error of arresting', Wilde remarks, 'his intellectual development by' formally accepting that 'creed' (*Works*, p. 106). These are certainly powerful words. Yet on his deathbed Wilde himself did at last choose to convert, having been on the brink of doing so time and again throughout his life.

It is also for this reason Wilde embeds the allegory of a morality play in his novel. Unlike symbolism, which has proven, historically if nothing else, that, unable to keep its grip on some sort of ideal principle, it can slide into becoming little more than a sensory stimulus, allegory, whether intrinsically or because it is so firmly grounded in that morality of which it is often the representation, does not lose, or has not lost, its solid ethical foundation, a foundation, furthermore, deeply rooted in religion. This is eminently evident in the genealogical tree of the morality play itself. A dramatization of an exemplum, which begins as an extended illustration in a sermon, which in turn has a scriptural passage generally as its starting point, the morality play derives ultimately from a Biblical text. And often, in fact, it points explicitly to the genres it subsumes. So does Oscar Wilde in his novel. Clearly aware of the descent of the form he takes as his frame, Wilde incorporates them all into the structure of his narrative. Under the entire story lies the Biblical text of the sermon, actually two

[31] Frank Harris, *Oscar Wilde: His Life and Confessions* (New York: Horizon Press, 1930; repr. 1974 with an introduction by Frank McShane), p. 33.

Biblical texts. One is spoken by Lord Henry who, however, does not recall the crucial conclusion of the passage. '"By the way"', he asks at one point speaking to Dorian Gray one day, '"what does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose' how does the quotation run? – 'his own soul"?' (*Works*, p. 161). A verse that appears in Mark 8:36 as well as in Matthew 16:26, this was a text that haunted Wilde. He had alluded to it already in the opening poem, 'Hélas!' of his first published volume of verse nearly a decade before the novel, asking there whether the poet, because of his love for the sensuous world, was doomed to 'lose a soul's inheritance' – asking, that is whether aestheticism was necessarily and inherently incompatible with religion, a question which he finally answered in the affirmative in *Dorian Gray*. The second of the Biblical texts is articulated by Basil and it is more ironic yet that Basil cannot even remember the fact that this is a scriptural passage, Isiah 1:18, as it happens. '"Isn't there a verse somewhere"', he asks when he sees the dreadful portrait, '"'though your sins be as scarlet I will make them white as snow'"?' (*Works*, p. 122). As in the sermon and the exemplum, the Biblical text of the morality play is intended as a lesson designed for man's spiritual good. Again, Wilde follows the paradigm. Looking on that frightful portrait and the changes it has recorded, Basil exclaims '"What an awful lesson!"' (*Works*, p. 122). And the lesson of the portrait is the lesson of the book.

The allegory of the novel is atemporal, of course – the eternal moral truth – but Wilde is concerned to encompass in it the historical moment also, to bring that eternal vision to bear – otherwise it is utterly useless – on the condition of modern life, and this he does by a striking twist on yet another traditional element in the medieval morality play, the element known as the Summons of Death. The point of this trope in the Middle Ages was to remind us of our mortality, therefore of the day of judgment, and it was critical to the morality play because it stressed, in turn, the importance of choosing virtue before that ultimate day arrives. *The Pride of Life*, one of the earliest of the morality plays extant (although its ending has been lost), is a typical example, showing a King who embodies the title because he does not believe he will die but who discovers that those things on which he counts to stave off death cannot protect him in the end. Dorian speaks in a similar vein. Although he confesses to being terrified by the thought of approaching death, Death itself, he proudly boasts, is something of which he has '"no terror"' (*Works*, p. 153). He is exactly that Everyman who needs to be reminded of death and of the judgment it entails, and that reminder comes, in fact, in the figure of James Vane, another of the many characters whose role in the novel is allegorical. The younger brother of Sibyl Vane, James

makes a vow when he leaves England, having decided to go to sea, that if anyone harms his sister he will kill him on his return. He does not return for many years but, on arriving in England again and learning that Dorian is responsible for his sister's suicide, he is determined to keep his vow. Tracking Dorian through the streets, he acts in that figurative role. But when he finally catches up with him, Dorian, citing his youthful appearance, persuades him he is not old enough to be the man Vane thinks he is. For the moment, Death is cheated. Death seems cheated yet again when Vane, his misapprehension corrected, follows Dorian to Selby Royal, the ancestral Gray estate. The house itself, in Gothic style, assumes an inauspicious character. It is an 'ill-omened place', thinks Dorian. 'Death' walks 'in the sunlight' there (*Works*, p. 156). The words have an allegorical ring and they are realized allegorically. As he glances out his window, standing framed against the sill exactly as though he were a portrait, Dorian catches sight of Vane watching him from the sunny field (*Works*, p. 151). Through that identical field, however, a hunting party happens to pass and aiming wildly at a hare, one of the hunters shoots Vane instead. Once again, it would appear, Dorian has managed to escape the allegorical retribution. But this is not at all the case. For it is this incident that so disgusts Dorian with himself that, when he sees his sins inscribed on his portrait one more time, he grabs a knife and stabs his image, only to find he has stabbed himself. As in the morality play, Death has summoned and been answered.

It is not Dorian alone, however, who is being summoned here. Dorian's are the sins of the age. He is an Everyman because his is the character of his era. What is at stake here is not one man who happens to have gone astray. It is the very progress of history and the direction in which it is headed. '"Civilization"', says Lord Henry in one of his many true remarks on the nature of reality, is not '"an easy thing to attain to"' (*Works*, p. 157). And the principles of which Dorian has been the representative are as deadly to the period as they have turned out to be to him. When Lord Henry, in response to Lady Narborough's remarks on the mores of the time, explains by saying '"Fin de siècle"', his hostess answers '"Fin du globe"' (*Works*, p. 137). This sense of doom and apocalypse marks the last quarter of the nineteenth and the first of the twentieth century, from George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda*, in which the very name of the hero recalls the writing on the wall, to D. H. Lawrence's *Women in Love*, which ends in the apocalyptic death of its Everyman, Gerald Critch. And for most of those who prophecy an apocalyptic end, the causes are the skepticism and the materialism of the age. Wilde is characteristic and different. Although it was Victorian skepticism that inspired Walter Pater to take issue with Matthew Arnold on the nature and purpose of art, Wilde, by

putting aestheticism at the center of the question, as the symptom and then the cause of a certain view of life, places the moral burden of history where Matthew Arnold had placed it himself when he had predicted that poetry would be required to take up the work of philosophy and religion, squarely in the hands of art. But it is not the art of aestheticism. If, in trying to create out of the chaos of the material something ordered and meaningful, art must be opposed to realism, in seeking to carry a moral vision and to give a shape to history, it must equally be opposed to the aestheticism that argues art must only be its own end.

And this is where Oscar Wilde ends himself in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Alluring as he finds the freedom and the beauty of aestheticism, he cannot reject the responsibility art must assume in the modern world. By enclosing his own narrative in a medieval allegory, he offers an artistic parable that gives to purely aesthetic principles the boundary of a moral form.

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

DANTE ON THE EDWARDIAN STAGE: STEPHEN PHILLIPS'S *PAOLO AND FRANCESCA*

WILLIAM CALIN

STEPHEN PHILLIPS WAS A leading dramatist of the Edwardian age, celebrated for having renewed the national tradition of tragedy in verse. Phillips's first four plays were a success, he published at John Lane, The Bodley Head (who featured such names as Davidson, Dowson, Johnson, Le Gallienne, and Symons), and he received rave reviews in England and abroad. Three German doctoral dissertations were devoted to Phillips during his brief lifetime.[1] And he was especially well received in the States, where his dramas were deemed an appropriate anniversary gift for bookish couples: Hence the presence of *Paolo and Francesca* and *Herod* in my parents' library, hence my decision to collect Bodley Head items, hence the subject of this paper.

With the advent of modernism, Phillips's reputation plummeted and he disappeared from view.[2] Whereas some members of the Rhymers Club have been, at least partially, rehabilitated, such is not the case for the author of *Paolo and Francesca*. A member of serious academic studies on the literature and stagecraft of the day do not mention him; the MLA data base retrieves only two articles.[3] This is a pity, given the phenomenon in culture studies that Phillips embodies: the last effort to resurrect a dated yet all-but-fetishized inheritance: the tradition of high tragedy in high verse. In this Phillips does not stand alone; he corresponds to one on the other side of the Channel – Edmond Rostand, the author of *Cyrano*. Of course, Phillips is no Rostand. Yet the phenomenon is precisely the same, and it occurred during the very same decade.

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[1] Alfred Gilde, Die dramatische Behandlung der Rückkehr des Odysseus bei Nicholas Rowe, Robert Bridges und Stephen Phillips (Königsberg, 1903); Gustav Louis Plessow, Beiträge zur Kritik Stephen Phillipsscher Dichtungen (Marburg: Friedrich, 1911); Esther Cary, Beiträge zur Charakteristik von Stephen Phillipss Stil (Marburg: Koch, 1912).

[2] A topic examined by Peter Frost, 'The Rise and Fall of Stephen Phillips', *English Literature in Transition*, 25 (1982), 225–31.

[3] Frost, 'The Rise and Fall', and R. B. Kershner, Jr., 'Joyce and Stephen Phillips's *Ulysses*', *James Joyce Quarterly*, 13 (1975–76), 194–201; also an unpublished doctoral dissertation.

Phillips's career was launched, and he achieved his greatest success in, a drama based on Canto V of the *Inferno*: *Paolo and Francesca*, licensed in 1899, published in 1900, and produced in 1902.[4] I should like to examine this play in its intertextual relationship with Dante and as an example of turn-of-the-century English medievalism. Four points will be presented.

1. The plot is simplicity itself, repeating, as it were, and amplifying the story of Paolo and Francesca prior to their encounter with Dante in hell. Giovanni Malatesta da Rimini weds Francesca. His brother, Paolo, loves her. They avow their love, reading together the avowal of love between Lancelot and Guinevere. Giovanni catches them *in flagrante delicto* and slays them.

Act I ends with a curious episode, one in which the aged and blind Angela, Giovanni's old nurse, warns him against the projected marriage. She beholds, in a vision:

> A place of leaves: and ah! how still it is!
> She sits alone amid great roses. [...]
> Who is he that steals in upon your bride?
> [...] He reads out of a book. [...]
> Nearer he drew and kissed her on the lips. [...]
> I see two lying dead upon a bier–
> Slain suddenly, and in each other's arms (I, p. 29)

Angela's vision, carried off on its own terms, may be rather good theatre (Phillips had been a professional actor), but destroys any possibility for suspense in this play. In addition, prior to Angela's entreaty, other hints are dropped. Giovanni growls his jealousy:

> What I have snared, in that I set my teeth
> And lose with agony; when hath the prey
> Writhed from our mastiff-fangs? (I, p. 15)

Francesca comments on her own life experience and its relation to literature:

> I have wept but on the pages of a book,
> And I have longed for sorrow of my own. (I, p. 17)

And proclaims, concerning Paolo:

> Sir, I will love him: is he not my brother? (I, p. 18)

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[4] Stephen Phillips, *Paolo and Francesca: A Tragedy in Four Acts* (London and New York: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1900).

The implied audience knows. It has to know, otherwise these allusions serve no function, and the Angela scene serves no function.

I submit the following hypothesis. Phillips chose to exploit tragic irony and to sacrifice suspense because he had no choice, or, by choosing to dramatize the Paolo and Francesca story, he chose to have no choice. By the 1890s, a century after romanticism had made Dante a figure of universal greatness (it is significant that it is only with medievalist romanticism that the medieval Dante achieved such status), the educated English reading public knew Dante; those theatre goers who supported tragedy in verse knew Dante. Or, if they had forgotten, it was easy to have a servant fetch the Carey translation from the library and to brush up on Canto V – only five pages – before jumping into the carriage and off to the West End. Phillips, therefore, presuming knowledge of the story in his audience, treats his material in the Greek and classical French manner. He expects the audience to ask not how the story will end but how he will develop the known story and known ending. Hence the tragic irony, hence Angela's vision, which clearly distinguishes the characters – utter ninnies, who fail to understand or, once they understand, do precisely the wrong things – from the implied audience which knows all too well and can observe, from the beginning of Act I to the end of Act IV, the unfolding of a destiny fatal and foreordained.

2. This fatal and foreordained destiny is quite fascinating, from a poststructuralist perspective, given that it is totally, uniquely textual. Neither Phillips nor his public had, presumably, any knowledge of the history of thirteenth-century Rimini other than from the pages of Dante and, perhaps, reproductions of frescos. Dante's Canto V shapes the play from beginning to end; for the unique goal of the plot is to bring the characters and the audience to the point where they (Paolo and Francesca) will be in Canto V. The Dantean intertext functions literally as fate or destiny. The scene of the fall occurs in Act III, when in Dante the lovers read from the Old French *Prose Lancelot*, and Phillips has them quote lines in a moderately stilted, slightly archaic English, perhaps penned by Phillips himself.

However, the crisis is postponed. In Act IV the two meet again, to love and will to love again. Now their will to love, having reached its apex, is couched in the vision of another poet. They evoke their fate in the afterlife where they expect to be punished. They speak, in this life, just prior to dying, words that evoke and recall to the audience that other world in its unique Dantean imagery:

> And let our souls together soar away.
> [...] that law which holds the stars
> In palpitating cosmic passion bright;

> By which the very sun enthralls the earth,
> And all the waves of the world faint to the moon.
> Even by such attraction we too rush
> Together through the everlasting years,
> Us, then, whose only pain can be to part, [...]
> Together to be blown about the globe! [...]
> Still, still together, [...] us who cannot part [. . .] (IV, pp. 110–12)

Significantly, the play, oriented toward the future, evokes in the audience the memory of Dante, thus rejoining Dante, whose characters, oriented toward the past, evoke their own memory. And, whereas Dante exalts as intertext the *Prose Lancelot*, the romance summa of secular chivalry, so also does Phillips, and by pseudo-citation; yet in Phillips we sense also the infinitely weightier presence of another intertext, the sacred summa of the *Commedia*, which can never be mentioned at all.

3. The plot thus serves to transform an innocent girl and a passionate yet scrupulous young man into the eternal lovers of Dante's Canto V and Phillips's Act IV. Phillips anticipates Auerbach's reading of the *Commedia* in that the characters learn to become and to grow into what they will be for eternity, their and our ultimate reality.[5] However, Phillips's reading diverges totally from the standard twentieth-century Christian reception of Dante, shaped as it is by Fergusson, Singleton, Musa, Freccero, and so many others.[6] In Phillips there is no distinction between Dante the Pilgrim and Dante the Narrator; actually, as I observed earlier, there is no Dante at all (in person) and, therefore, no Dantean corrective voice. All we see and hear are the lovers proclaiming their desire to remain together for eternity, at whatever price, in the process defying God:

> There centuries shall in a moment pass,
> And all the cycles in one hour elapse!
> Still, still together, even when faints Thy sun,
> And past our souls Thy stars like ashes fall,
> How wilt Thou punish us who cannot part? (IV, p. 112)

Their last words on stage are not for the distant God unknown, all but absent from the play, but for each other (recalling Thomas's *Roman*

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[5] Erich Auerbach, *Dante als Dichter der irdischen Welt* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1929).

[6] Francis Fergusson, *Dante's Drama of the Mind: A Modern Reading of the 'Purgatorio'* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953); Charles S. Singleton, *Dante Studies*, 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954–58); Mark Musa, *Advent at the Gates: Dante's 'Comedy'* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1974); John Freccero, *Dante: The Poetics of Conversion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986).

de Tristan), each crying out the other's name: 'Paolo! Paolo!' 'Francesca!'

This highly romantic version is not Stephen Phillips's personal invention. It is the standard reading of his century, codified by Francesco De Sanctis, author of the first modern history of a national literature, who praised the *Commedia* for the extraordinarily human, real, and totally 'modern' scenes, brief gems unfortunately embedded in an outmoded, didactic, allegorical medieval frame.[7] This was the Victorian vision of Dante. Thus, Phillips, in the spirit of his age, in tune with the medievalism of his age, following upon De Sanctis and the Pre-Raphaelites, sentimentalized Dante, exalting at the expense of Catholic orthodoxy the doomed lovers and love itself.

4. Also in the spirit of his age, Phillips sentimentalizes the family, lyrically evoking Francesca's innocent girlhood and her peril caught between an elderly husband and an ardent brother-in-law. (He has to do *something* between Act I and Act IV, and probing psychological depths à la Shakespeare or Racine was not his forte.) Francesca is presented as a very young girl, innocent of the world, above all innocent in love. Francesca begs Paolo, as a brother, not to leave her:

> I am still a child.
> I feel that to my husband I could go
> Kiss him good-night, or sing him to his sleep,
> And there an end. (I, p. 17)

More revealingly, more poignantly:

> Can we not play together a brief while?
> Stay, then, a little! (I, p. 18)

In Act II, to make Paolo stay, she tries to loosen his armour. Then the girl marvels that he, who has killed men, should quake and blanche before her little hand. She runs to a mirror:

> Where is the glass? O, face unknown and strange!
> Slight face, and yet the cause of woe to men!
> [...] Nita, he trembled to look up at me!
> And when I nearer came all pale he grew.
> And when I smiled he suffered, as it seemed;
> And then I smiled again: for it was strange.
> Is't wicked such sweet cruelty to use? (II, pp. 41–42)

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[7] Francesco De Sanctis, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, 2 vols (Naples: Morano, 1970), I, chap. 7.

Just as Francesca calls upon Paolo, her 'brother', to stay and play and sing with her, so Giovanni urges the youth, his brother, to look after her and protect her from ravenous suitors. Phillips's dramatic irony is intensified by the domestic imagery and family structure, a structure fragile and doomed to collapse. In the end, although the brother and sister will have taken upon themselves eternal passion, Giovanni has the last word and cries (now the intertext is Webster, also *Romeo and Juliet*):

> I did not know the dead could have such hair.
> Hide them. They look like children fast asleep! (IV, p. 120)

Phillips's exploitation of the family and of childhood will flower in *Ulysses*, where Odysseus – poor devil – is miserable from beginning to end because he really wants most in the world to play with a child, before the fire, under Penelope's fond eyes while she weaves; and in *The Sin of David*, where a David-and-Bathsheba type couple are punished by the loss of their child and vow to do penance while remaining together as a family.[8] This particular mindset Frye called 'low mimetic', Jauss 'la douceur du foyer', and I have related it to the German period style Biedermeier, which, I believe, has a European impact and European universality.[9] Valorizing the family and domestic intimacy, valorizing childhood and innocence, treating the lives of little people with high seriousness – this pre-eminently petty bourgeois mindset dominated much of nineteenth-century high culture, and still dominates much of twentieth-century American low culture.

In conclusion, I do not claim that Stephen Phillips is a great writer in need of rehabilitation. He is a good writer who, were it not for the advent of modernism, would have remained in the public eye. The green Bodley Head volumes are to be found in college libraries, and the highly stylized diction of verse drama in English has its own virtues; this is a style some of us may prefer to Ashbery and Olson. Most important of all, from an historical perspective, at the turn of the century we find a significant kind of medievalism, in which the past age is recast in contemporary terms, with the exaltation of romantic, fatal love and of young innocence in the family; and in which an

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[8] Stephen Phillips, *Ulysses: A Drama in a Prologue and Three Acts* (London and New York: John Lane, 1902); *The Sin of David* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1904).

[9] Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 44–45, 49–52; Hans Robert Jauss, 'La Douceur du foyer: Lyrik des Jahres 1857 als Muster der Vermittlung sozialer Normen', in his *Ästhetische Erfahrung und literarische Hermeneutik* (Munich: Fink, 1977), I, pp. 343–76; William Calin, *A Muse for Heroes: Nine Centuries of the Epic in France* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), chap. 13.

entire play is cast in the image of, and shaped to conform to, a medieval book enshrined in the canon of culture.

Finally (this is an open-ended conclusion, including a tentative, subversive Point Five), I find it significant that the Victorian-Edwardian Englishman located his story of the corruption of innocence, passion, adultery, treachery, murder, and incest in Italy and in the Middle Ages. Similarly, Phillips's dramas *Herod* and *Nero* explore the pathology of unbridled sensuality, decadence, and madness.[10] Every student of post-colonialist theory and the works of Edward Said will recognize at once a classical example of Orientalism.[11] 'Orientalism!' you may object. 'In Rimini? In Rome?' Yes, I reply, in Said's voice. Orientalism is not a fixed topographical locus; it is a creation of the mind according to which the Westerner displaces onto the Orient his dread of, and yearning for, sensuality, violence, lawlessness, barbarism, decadence, and, especially, the feminine and the effeminate. After all, for a reasonable portion of Phillips's audience, the Orient began at Calais. And medievalism? I submit that the displacement can occur over time as well as in space. For those who accept the liberal myth of progress, if we go back far enough we are all Orientals. But that is the subject for another paper in another venue.

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[10] Stephen Phillips, *Herod: A Tragedy* (London and New York: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1901); *Nero* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1906).

[11] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

MEDIEVALISM, CLASSICISM, AND THE FICTION OF E. M. FORSTER

KATHLEEN VERDUIN[1]

> Two great principles divide the world, and contend for the mastery, antiquity and the middle ages. These are the two civilisations that have preceded us, the two elements of which ours is composed. All political as well as religious questions reduce themselves practically to this. This is the great dualism that runs through our society.
>
> Lord Acton, c. 1859

> Continuous history is the indispensable correlative of the founding function of the subject: the guarantee that everything that has eluded him may be restored to him; the certainty that time will disperse nothing without restoring it in a reconstituted unity; the promise that one day the subject – in the form of historical consciousness – will once again be able to appreciate, to bring back under his sway, all those things that are kept at a distance by difference, and find in them what might be called his abode.
>
> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*

E. M. FORSTER'S INDICTMENT OF Edwardian social mores was never more trenchant than in his portrayal of Cecil Vyse in the 1908 novel *A Room with a View*: 'a perfect repressed J. Alfred Prufrock', as a reviewer of the 1986 Merchant-Ivory film version commented, 'whose heart is as starched as his collar'.[2] Readers of Forster's novel will recall, however, that Forster situates this eminently Edwardian character quite unmistakably in the Middle Ages. Chapter 8, in which Cecil makes his

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[1] Leslie Workman writes: 'This paper can be regarded as an interesting if unusual example of cooperation between author and editor. After Kathleen Verduin and I saw the film "A Room with a View" I suggested to her that she read the book, which was then fresh in my memory, and that we write an article together. The classical-medieval antithesis is much more clearly and forcibly expressed in the book than the film, and in my mind the review practically wrote itself. By the time we saw the film a second time, and this was while Kathleen was taking an NEH Institute on Dante at Dartmouth, which probably reinforced the experience, we were discussing the paper and it soon became quite clear that this was Kathleen's paper and not mine. It was in fact one that I could not have written, and I very happily surrendered it to someone who could. Needless to say, discussion, sometimes forceful, continued long after that'.

[2] Jack Kroll, 'Love in Bloom', review of 'A Room with a View' (1986), directed by James Ivory and Ismail Merchant, *Newsweek*, 10 March 1986, p. 75.

appearance, is titled succinctly if cryptically 'Mediaeval', and indeed the word is proffered as Cecil's defining context:

> He was mediaeval. Like a Gothic statue. Tall and refined, with shoulders that seemed braced square by an effort of will, and a head that tilted a little higher than the usual level of vision, he resembled those fastidious saints who guard the portals of a French cathedral. Well educated, well endowed, and not deficient physically, he remained in the grip of a certain devil whom the modern world knows as self-consciousness, and whom the mediaeval, with dimmer vision, worshipped as asceticism. A Gothic statue implies celibacy, just as a Greek statue implies fruition [...] .[3]

The polemical binarization of medieval and classical in this passage is of course too obvious to have escaped previous attention: as Wilfred Stone acknowledged some thirty years ago, 'Medieval versus classical, ascetic versus pagan, and Gothic versus Greek – these are some of the important "rhythms" of the novel'. In the early 1980s, Robert K. Martin inferred a similar dualism running through all of Forster's fiction, a dualism that, in Martin's words, 'we can call classic and romantic, or Hebrew and Hellene, or even England and Italy'.[4] While intuitively on target, however, these statements fall short of critical illumination by failing to question the cultural archaeology of Forster's announced polarities.

New trends in literary and cultural studies have only recently begun to redress the ingenuous acceptance of terms like 'Greek' and 'Gothic' as self-evident or opaque. Since his death in 1970 – an event coinciding almost exactly with the first wave of the gay liberation movement – critics and biographers have speculated increasingly about Forster's self-acknowledged homosexuality and its role in the production of his fiction; as Martin and George Piggford point out in their introduction to the recent collection *Queer Forster*, the posthumous publication of the author's explicitly homoerotic *Maurice* and *The Life to Come* 'opened the floodgates for critical studies

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[3] E. M. Forster, *A Room with a View*, ed. by Oliver Stallybrass, vol. 3 of the Abinger Edition of the Writings of E. M. Forster (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1977), pp. 86–87; subsequent references in the text. Throughout this essay the Abinger Edition is followed in all particulars except that I have retained Forster's original spelling, 'mediaeval'.

[4] Wilfred Stone, *The Cave and the Mountain: A Study of E. M. Forster* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), p. 226; Richard K. Martin, 'The Paterian Mode in Forster's Fiction: *The Longest Journey* to *Pharos and Pharillon*', in *E. M. Forster: Centenary Revaluations*, ed. by Judith Scherer Herz and Robert K. Martin (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 100. See also Norman Page, *E. M. Forster* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1987), p. 43.

incorporating his sexual themes'.[5] Born in 1879, Forster matured in a period to which Foucault and now many others trace modern constructions of homosexuality as a distinguishable personal category; indeed, as Nicola Beauman notes, Forster's mother was hurrying him away to Europe in flight from a potentially sexual relationship with a country boy mere days after newspapers broke the story of the Wilde scandal in 1895.[6] As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick asserts, however, normative definitions of any kind typically emerge within a complex cultural network – 'the master terms of a particular historical moment entangle most inextricably the filaments of other important definitional nexuses'[7] – and for Forster and his contemporaries, these definitional nexuses necessarily included prevailing organizations of history. Forster's attraction to classical culture has been well documented since Frederick Crews's extensive treatment in 1962,[8] and the rapid advance of gender and especially of gay studies in the last decade has placed beyond question metonymic conjunctions between classical sexual practice and the newly self-aware homosexual subculture of Forster's generation.[9] The 'Romantic rediscovery of ancient Greece', in Sedgwick's words, 'cleared out – as much as recreated – for the nineteenth century a prestigious, historically underfurnished imaginative space in which relations to and among human bodies might be newly a subject of utopian speculation. Synecdochically represented as it tended to be by statues of nude young men, the Victorian cult of Greece gently, unpointedly, and

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[5] Robert K. Martin and George Piggford, 'Introduction: Queer, Forster?', in *Queer Forster*, ed. by Martin and Piggford (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 18.

[6] Nicola Beauman, *E. M. Forster: A Biography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), pp. 69–70, cited in Martin and Piggford, p. 11.

[7] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), p. 11.

[8] Frederick C. Crews, *E. M. Forster: The Perils of Humanism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), pp. 124–41.

[9] See especially, in addition to Martin and Piggford, James Eli Adams, *Dandies and Desert Saints: Styles of Victorian Masculinity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 229–31 ('Afterword'); Joseph Bristow, 'Against "Effeminacy": The Sexual Predicament of E. M. Forster's Fiction', chapter 2 of his *Effeminate England: Homoerotic Writing after 1885* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 55–99; Richard Dellamora, 'E. M. Forster at the End', chapter 4 of his *Apocalyptic Overtures: Sexual Politics and the Sense of an Ending* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994), pp. 83–97; Scott R. Nelson, 'Narrative Inversion: The Textual Construction of Homosexuality in E. M. Forster's Novels', *Style*, 26.2 (Summer 1992), 310–26; and several articles in Jeremy Tambling, ed., *E. M. Forster* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1995).

unexclusively positioned male flesh and muscle as the indicative instances of "the" body, of a body whose surfaces, features, and abilities might be the subject or object of unphobic enjoyment'[10] – in Forster's carefully evasive term, 'fruition'.

Valuable as these insights are, however, they perpetuate an imbalance pervasive since the beginning of Forster studies and perhaps symptomatic of a critical myopia across the board: like Crews, Lionel Trilling, and other early students of Forster, contemporary scholars continue to stress Forster's classicism but remain oblivious to his engagement with the Middle Ages, which they remark only in passing if at all.[11] Placed in historical context, however, Forster's antimedievalism can hardly be dismissed as an incidental facet of his classicism: instead, it forms the opposite pole of a dialectic crucial to his self-definition and, as my epigraph from Acton indicates, to nineteenth-century self-definition as well.[12] In his essay 'Medievalism and Romanticism', Leslie J. Workman has retraced the process by which an emergent academic discourse on 'romanticism' – a term defined unambiguously by Henry Beers in 1899 as simply 'the reproduction in modern art or literature, of the life and thought of the middle ages', paired with classicism as 'the two great historical eras of the world' – has tended conspicuously to subordinate medievalism as a subset, thus delaying academic isolation of medievalism as a separable phenomenon until the last few decades.[13] Heretofore as 'hidden from history', therefore, as his now vividly apparent homosexual subtext,[14] Forster's artistic deployment of the 'two great principles' cited by

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[10] Sedgwick, *Epistemology*, p. 136.

[11] See Lionel Trilling, *E. M. Forster* (Norfolk, CT: New Directions, 1943), p. 19; David Dowling, *Bloomsbury Aesthetics and the Novels of Forster and Woolf* (New York: Macmillan, 1985), p. 57.

[12] 'Acton on the Middle Ages', first published in Herbert Butterfield, ed., *Man On His Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), pp. 212–13. This quotation is also the epigraph for all volumes of *Studies in Medievalism*.

[13] Leslie J. Workman, 'Medievalism and Romanticism', in *Medievalism and Romanticism 1750–1850*, ed. by Leslie J. Workman, *Poetica* 39–40 (1993), 1–44; Henry A. Beers, 'Preface', *A History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Henry Holt, 1899), p. 2, cited in Workman, p. 2. *The Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, ed. by Philip F. Wiener (New York: Scribner's, 1973), included substantial entries on classicism and Romanticism but nothing on medievalism; medievalism is referred to as a 'facet of Romanticism' in Joseph Rosenblum, 'Medievalism', *Encyclopedia of Romanticism*, ed. by Laura Dabundo (New York: Garland, 1992), p. 369.

[14] I take the phrase from *Hidden from History: Reclaiming the Gay and Lesbian Past*, ed. Martin Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncy, Jr (New York: Meridian, 1990).

Acton constitutes an equally clamant thematic in his fiction, a deliberately subversive manipulation of codes by which he could both assert and camouflage his resentment of conventional gender norms as an embattled campaign against the western past.

Medievalism and classicism in Victorian England

As Alice Chandler was among the first to show, the various medieval revivals of the nineteenth century embraced nearly every aspect of English culture: 'the very beds people slept in were apt to be Gothic'.[15] Obviously this medievalism ramified in many directions, including the unmistakable eroticism of the Pre-Raphaelites: but these manifestations, now foregrounded in Victorian studies, may have been less prominent in their own time than the more socially sanctioned medievalism enlisted in support of convention. A. W. Pugin's Gothic Houses of Parliament, erected in 1836 in visible assertion of the medieval character of English institutions,[16] exemplify the incipient alliance between medievalism and the Victorian establishment; as Richard Jenkyns reports, numerous classical models for Prince Albert's tomb were ultimately rejected in favour of a neo-Gothic monument designed by George Gilbert Scott.[17] Given this privileged public status, medievalism inevitably infiltrated contemporary class and gender roles, primarily as defined under the rubric of 'chivalry' – a social ideal finally so widespread, as Mark Girouard has amply demonstrated in *The Return to Camelot*, that by the time the *Titanic* went down in 1912,

> All gentlemen knew that they must be brave, show no sign of cowardice, be courteous and protective to women and children, be loyal to their comrades and meet death without flinching. They knew it because they had learnt the code of the gentleman in a multitude of different ways, through

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[15] Alice Chandler, *A Dream of Order: The Medieval Ideal in Nineteenth-Century English Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), p. 1. See also Leslie J. Workman and Alice P. Kenney, 'Ruins, Romance, and Reality: Medievalism in Anglo-American Imagination and Taste, 1750–1840', *Winterthur Portfolio* 10 (1976), 131–63.

[16] An important study in this regard is R. J. Smith, *The Gothic Bequest: Medieval Institutions in British Thought, 1688–1863* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). On the Houses of Parliament, see Kenneth Clark, *The Gothic Revival: An Essay in the History of Taste* (1928; repr. New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 108–21.

[17] Richard Jenkyns, *Dignity and Decadence: Victorian Art and the Classical Inheritance* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), pp. 2–5.

> advice, through example, through what they had been taught at school and by their parents, and through endless stories of chivalry, daring, knights, gentlemen, and gallantry which they had read or been told about by way of history books, ballads, poems, plays, pictures and novels.[18]

Democratized, as Norman Vance has shown in *The Sinews of the Spirit*, into an ideal of manliness accessible to all classes,[19] 'chivalry' also functioned conceptually to uphold concomitant social constructions of sexuality and the feminine. Charles Mills, whose 1826 *History of Chivalry* complemented the immensely popular novels of Walter Scott in shaping nineteenth-century ideas of the Middle Ages, proposed that 'the gallant and Christian chivalry of Europe [...] established woman in her just rank in the moral world'.[20] Tennyson gave the imperatives of Victorian chivalry their classic expression in the *Idylls*:

> To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
> To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
> And worship her by years of noble deeds,
> Until they won her; for indeed I know
> Of no more subtle master under heaven
> Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
> Not only to keep down the base in man,
> But teach high thought, and amiable words
> And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
> And love of truth, and all that makes a man.[21]

The power of a 'maiden passion for a maid' to 'keep down the base in man' infused concepts of Christian chivalry disseminated throughout the public schools by advocates like Charles Kingsley and Thomas Hughes, and throughout Victorian culture generally by their admirers, as part of the 'muscular Christianity' movement: in the words of Hughes, while the mere 'muscleman' perceived his body as 'at once the servant and fomenter of those fierce and brutal passions which he seems to think it a necessity [...] to indulge and obey', the muscular Christian 'has hold of the old chivalrous and Christian belief, that a

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[18] Mark Girouard, *The Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), p. 7.

[19] Norman Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit: The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), especially pp. 17–26.

[20] Charles Mills, *The History of Chivalry: Knighthood and Its Times*, 2 vols (New York: Cary and Lea, 1826), I, 26.

[21] *The Poems of Tennyson*, ed. by Christopher Ricks (London: Longmans, 1969), pp. 1736–37. See also Antony H. Harrison, 'Medievalism and the Ideologies of Victorian Poetry', *Studies in Medievalism* IV, *Medievalism in England* (1992), 219–34.

man's body is given him to be trained and brought into subjection and then used for the protection of the weak, the advancement of all righteous causes, and the subduing of the earth which God has given to the children of men'.[22] As Girouard explains, 'Muscular Christianity helped make purity an essential element of nineteenth-century chivalry. The fights in which a modern knight engaged [...] were now extended again to those with which he gained control over his own passions'.[23] The image of the Middle Ages as reinscribed by popular art, literature, and the standard avenues of moral instruction readily invoked conventionalized paradigms of Christian manhood epitomized in the virginal figure of Sir Galahad – and signaled, at least on one level, the resolute discipline of male sexuality into chivalrous service of the feminine.

The concurrent privileging of a 'classical' education may similarly have been intended to promote established social values. A. C. Benson recalled in one of his memoirs that 'an ancient Dean of Christ Church' had offered three reasons for the study of Greek: 'the first was that it enabled you to read the words of the Saviour in the original tongue; the second, that it gave you a proper contempt for those who were ignorant of it; and the third was that it led to situations of emolument'.[24] But the medieval revivals of the nineteenth century invited nearly from their outset a self-legitimating contrast with the paganism of antiquity: as Mme de Staël wrote in *De L'Allemagne* (1813) – first published, incidentally, in London – the words 'classic' and 'romantic' could well be applied to 'the two eras of the world – the age before the establishing of Christianity, and the era following it'.[25] As the hallmark of the first fully Christian civilization, chivalry represented a salutary cultural advance: in the view of Mills, its principles 'proceeded from a divine source, which the classical ancients could not boast of'; Scott affirmed that while Greeks and Romans had fought 'for liberty or for conquest', the knights of the Middle Ages expended their energies 'for God and for their ladies'.[26]

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[22] Thomas Hughes, *Tom Brown at Oxford* (1861; repr. London: Macmillan, 1929), p. 99; quoted in David Rosen, 'The Volcano and the Cathedral: Muscular Christianity and the Origins of Primal Manliness', in *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, ed. by Donald E. Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 36–37.

[23] Girouard, p. 143.

[24] Arthur Christopher Benson, *From a College Window* (New York and London: Putnam's, 1909), p. 47.

[25] In *An Extraordinary Woman: Selected Writings of Germaine de Staël*, trans. by Vivian Folkenflik (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 299.

[26] Mills, I, 26; Sir Walter Scott, *Chivalry and Romance* (1818; repr. London, 1892), p. 10.

As Victorian society textualized the Middle Ages to idealize Christianity and install desirable paradigms of gender relations, Victorian classicism developed, perhaps inevitably, a potentially subversive wing. Already in 1809 the Romantic critic A. W. Schlegel had framed what would prove a durable picture of morally untroubled Greeks at play in Mediterranean sunshine: 'Of clear understanding, placed beneath a mild heaven, they lived and bloomed in full health of existence. [...] The whole of their art and poetry is expressive of the consciousness of this harmony in all their faculties'. More wistfully, Matthew Arnold's lecture on 'Pagan and Medieval Religious Sentiment', presented at Oxford in 1864, presumes the former as adapted to 'a gay and pleasure-loving multitude, – of light-hearted people [...] people never made to be serious, never made to be sick or sorry'.[27] Positing harmony and self-forgetfulness in place of the self-divided Victorian conscience, the discourse of classicism modulated by the last quarter of the nineteenth century into an exercised condemnation of the repression presumably traceable to the Christian Middle Ages, insouciant classical nudity challenging the ubiquitous public iconography of vigilant knight encased in protective armour. Pater defined the Renaissance in 1873 as a fortuitous resurgence of holistic paganism: 'The longer we contemplate the Hellenic ideal', Pater asserts, 'in which man was at unity with himself, with his physical nature, with the outward world, the more we may be inclined to regret that he should ever have passed beyond it, to contend for a perfection that makes the blood turbid, and frets the flesh, and discredits the actual world around us'.[28] In the same year J. A. Symonds, in his *Studies of the Greek Poets*, stressed the innocent sensuality of the

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[27] Schlegel is quoted in Timothy Webb, ed., *English Romantic Hellenism 1700–1824* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1982), p. 213; Matthew Arnold, *Lectures and Essays in Criticism*, vol. 3 of *Complete Prose Works*, ed. R. H. Super (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1962), p. 222. For studies of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century classicism, see John Buxton, *The Grecian Taste: Literature in the Age of Neoclassicism, 1740–1820* (London: Macmillan, 1978); Fani-Maria Tisagou, *The Rediscovery of Greece: Travellers and Painters of the Romantic Era* (New Rochelle, NY: Caratzas, 1981); Frank M. Turner, *The Greek Heritage in Modern Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981); and Richard Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), and *Dignity and Decadence*, already cited.

[28] Walter Pater, *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, ed. by Donald L. Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 150. On Pater and the Renaissance, see J. B. Bullen, *The Myth of the Renaissance in Nineteenth-Century Writing* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 273–98.

Greeks, a society to whom medieval asceticism was 'wholly alien'.[29] If only 'one man were to live out his life fully', Lord Henry Wotton intones in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), 'we would forget all the maladies of medievalism and return to the Hellenic ideal'.[30] In 1897 the great classicist Gilbert Murray lamented his culture's creation of 'an aesthetic and fleshly Greek in fine raiment, an abstract Pagan who lives to be contrasted with an equally abstract early Christian or Puritan, and to be glorified or mishandled according to the sentiments of his critics'.[31]

By no means removed from the academic study of antiquity, however, the popular fiction of the happily sensual Greek served to reinforce articulation of a counterdiscourse already operative within the university. Richard Dellamora cites the role of classical philology in locating and confronting Greek homosexuality – as Symonds would call it in his study of 1883, 'A Problem in Greek Ethics' – and Linda Dowling has recently shown the ironic passage at Oxford of Newman's monastic pedagogical ideal into the formation of a sexually anomalous community:

> The great effect of the university liberals' move to reappropriate [the] institutional structures and attitudes, originally molded by Tractarianism to channel an intense male homosociality toward religious ends, would be to recenter them instead upon Greek studies [...]. [B]oth in the specific program of Greek studies shaped by [Benjamin] Jowett and the Oxford reformers and in the diversity ideal more generally diffused by Victorian Hellenism there lies a possibility undreamt of by Victorian liberals: the legitimation of love between men.[32]

Pater, accordingly, wrote among the dreaming spires of the classicist Winckelmann's 'romantic, fervent friendships with young men', friendships that 'perfected his reconciliation with the spirit of Greek sculpture'; Symonds directly credited his reading of Homer and Plato with 'the sanction of the love which has been ruling me from childhood' and attributed the contemporary suppression of male love to 'the fall of Greek ethics and the rise of the morality of Christian mythology'.[33]

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[29] J. A. Symonds, *Studies of the Greek Poets*, 2 vols (1873; repr. New York, Harper's, 1901), II, 179.

[30] Quoted in Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece*, p. 294.

[31] Quoted in Turner, p. 13.

[32] Dellamora, *Apocalyptic Overtures*, p. 85; Linda Dowling, *Hellenism and Homosexuality in Victorian Oxford* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 66.

[33] Pater, p. 152; *The Memoirs of John Addington Symonds*, ed. by Phyllis Grosskurth (London: Hutchinson, 1984), p. 99; the second passage from Symonds is quoted in

Forster's education

Dowling's study concentrates on Oxford, but clearly Forster's matriculation at Cambridge provided him access to a parallel tradition. Elected to the Apostles, a university society identified by Joseph Bristow with an 'avant-garde homosexuality', he studied classics with Nathaniel Wedd, who according to John Colmer 'awoke in him a passionate interest in all things Greek, including Greek ideals of male friendship'; Forster was also a student of Oscar Browning, who, as a contemporary biographer put it, discussed homoerotic relations 'with a strange mixture of pagan enthusiasm and moral fervour'.[34] A more sustained influence was Forster's mentor Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, whose boyhood conversion to classical studies Forster depicts reverently in his biography.[35] Dickinson's adherence to the conventional wisdom regarding Greek wholeness and medieval self-division is evident in various writings – 'According to him', G. K. Chesterton remonstrated, 'the ideal of Paganism was [...] an ideal of full and satisfied humanity. According to him, the ideal of Christianity was the ideal of asceticism'[36] – and promulgated most effectively in his popular school text *The Greek View of Life* (1896):

> That antithesis of soul and body which was emphasized in the medieval view of life and dominates still our current ethical conceptions, is foreign to the Greek view of life [...]. Harmony, in a word, was the end they pursued, harmony of the soul with the body, and of the body with its

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Nelson, p. 312. Both Symonds and Wilde were educated at Oxford; Pater was elected a Fellow of Brasenose College in 1864.

[34] Joseph Bristow, 'Fratrum Societati: Forster's Apostolic Dedications', in Martin and Piggford, p. 114; John Colmer, *E. M. Forster: The Personal Voice* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 6–7; H. E. Wortham, *Oscar Browning* (London: Constable, 1927), p. 162. For a further study of the Apostles, see Richard Deacon, *The Cambridge Apostles* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1985). On Forster's education, see Beauman; Stone, pp. 61–88; Francis King, *E. M. Forster and His World* (New York: Scribner's, 1978), pp. 22–23; Jeffrey Meyers, *Homsexuality and Literature* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University, 1977), pp. 90–113; and the first volume of the definitive biography, P. N. Furbank's *E. M. Forster: A Life*, 2 vols (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1977).

[35] E. M. Forster, *Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson and Related Writings*, ed. by Oliver Stallybrass (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1973), p. 18.

[36] G. K. Chesterton, 'Paganism and Mr Lowes Dickinson', in *A Chesterton Anthology*, ed. P. J. Kavanaugh (San Fransciso: Ignatius Press; London: The Bodley Head, 1985), p. 123. Chesterton indicates that his essay is in response to Dickinson's paper 'How Long Halt Ye?' which appeared in the *Independent Review*; the *Independent Review*, which ran from 1903–1907, was largely a production of the Cambridge Apostles (see Bristow, 'Fratrum Societati', p. 116).

> environment; and it is this that distinguishes their ethical ideal from that which in later times has insisted on the fundamental antagonism of the inner to the outer life, and made the perfection of the spirit depend on the mortification of the flesh.[37]

In his preface to a 1956 reprint, Forster notes Dickinson's prolonged attention to the *Symposium*, where 'Plato expounds [...] his theory of love and his belief that the highest love is homosexual'; Forster offers no further gloss on this point, except to say that to Dickinson 'such a theory seemed characteristically Greek'.[38] As Forster's guarded reticence suggests, Dickinson's text encapsulated the covert cultural discourse linking classicism with homoeroticism; even in the 1930s, according to Noel Annan, *The Greek View of Life* was 'still part of the working library of liberation'.[39]

Forster's historical sense, then, derived more or less uncritically from the ultimately politicized iconography of the two concentric societies in which he operated: the one perceived as public, respectable, and heterosexual, its values authorized by the Christian Middle Ages; the other a closeted yet elite subculture affirming itself through identification with the pagan Greeks. Virtually prescribed by his membership in the latter, Forster's antimedievalism appears from the beginning of his career and endures to its close: so dependent, apparently, was his self-fashioning on the binarism evolved in the preceding century that he seems never to have doubted its foundations, and he remained almost perversely impervious to any data that might have undermined his early indoctrination. Never do his personal or public writings engage, for example, the paintings of Rossetti or the Tristan poems of Swinburne, irruptions of eroticism in a medieval context; never does he acknowledge the thematic heterosexuality of Greek mythology as employed by, again, Swinburne or later by

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[37] Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, *The Greek Way of Life* (1896; repr. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1956), pp. 252–53.

[38] Forster, Preface to Dickinson, p. iv.

[39] Noel Annan, Foreword to *The Autobiography of G. Lowes Dickinson*, ed. by Dennis Procter (London: Duckworth, 1973), p. ix. The self-conscious association between homosexuality and classicism in Forster's immediate circle is suggested in the work of his close friend Joe Ackerley: Ackerley employs Dickinson's title metonymically and writes, 'I saw myself in the tradition of the classic Greeks, surrounded by all the famous homosexuals of history' (*My Father and Myself* [New York: Coward-McCann, 1969], p. 118; see also pp. 126, 127, 139). Peter Alexander, in *William Plomer: A Biography* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), cites Ackerley's comment as representative of Plomer and his social circle (which included both Ackerley and Forster), adding that their classical education 'provided them with something akin to a homosexual ideology' (p. 167).

Pound; and even in his middle years he betrays no awareness of the reinterpretation of classicism by T. E. Hulme or, so notably in his own generation, by his acquaintance T. S. Eliot. As late as 1937 he was still describing the Greeks in words evocative of Dickinson, as 'normal healthy children'.[40]

Antimedievalism and antifeminism

Forster's interest in Dante offers a transparent exemplum of his tendentious resistance to the Middle Ages. Like other modernists – Yeats, Eliot, Pound, and Joyce, to name only the most prominent – and like Symonds and Oscar Browning before him, Forster was strongly attracted to Dante, whose cultural authority was by the early twentieth century enormous; he was well acquainted with the *Commedia* and also with Dante's minor works. But Forster's appropriation of Dante was inevitably mediated by a Victorian medievalism that claimed the *Vita Nuova* as an appropriately chivalrous model: as Steve Ellis has written, Victorians took Dante's Beatrice 'to their hearts because they could associate the "angiola giovanissima" [...] with, let us say, Patmore's Angel in the House'.[41] Predictably, therefore, Forster's lecture on Dante for the Working Men's College in 1907 asserts at its outset 'the medieval belief in the sharp division between the body and the soul', a division precipitating Dante's failure to accommodate the erotic. The *Vita Nuova*, Forster continues, is 'a rather queer little book' which 'we are apt to put down with a feeling of irritation'. If Dante 'walked into the room this evening', Forster concludes, 'we should make all haste to walk out of it'.[42]

One may cringe at this confident dismissal, but the premises of Dante's story were necessarily inimical to Forster's developing ideology. The sexual relation should properly be 'cheerful', he insisted in 1917, with 'none of the solemnity which Christianity has thought essential to Romance – , and which e.g. so puts me off the Vita Nuova'.[43] The extent of Forster's resistance is further indicated by the

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[40] E. M. Forster, *Commonplace Book*, ed. by Philip Gardner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), p. 108; further references in the text.

[41] Steve Ellis, *Dante and English Poetry: Shelley to T. S. Eliot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 106.

[42] E. M. Forster, 'Dante', in *Albergo Empedocle and Other Writings*, ed. by George H. Thomson (New York: Liveright, 1971), pp. 157, 168. On the context of Forster's Dante lecture, see Mary Lago, *E. M. Forster: A Literary Life* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1995), pp. 20–22.

[43] *Selected Letters of E. M. Forster*, ed. by Mary Lago and P. N. Furbank, 2 vols (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1983), I, 258.

notes on Dante left among his papers at Cambridge: Dante's 'public life [was] more attractive than his private', Forster remarks, and he finds the *Inferno* 'confused ethically'; Dante's dreams in the *Vita Nuova* are pronounced 'morbid', his account of his love for Beatrice 'rings most artificial', and Forster finally explodes, 'If [as Dante maintains] desire govern choice we are as the brutes. – How ungenial Dante is! Impossible to love him or to feel that he said a kind word to a chap in passing. Even when passion is good it must come last'.[44] In later life, similarly, Forster confessed his approval of 'affection and lust', consigning Dante to the ranks of those who 'look to the stars to sanction [their] idealism in personal relationships' – an idealism, Forster notes sardonically, that in Dante's case was no doubt helped along by the early death of his beloved (*Commonplace Book*, p. 39).

For Forster, then, the Middle Ages stood unshakably for the denial of the senses, the fatal division between body and soul of which Dante seemed the prototype. More disturbingly, antimedievalism also informs Forster's antifeminism, his habitual resentment of the cultural domination he attributed to women – a domination ratified, in his perception, by a genteel society in which 'folksong and Morris were fashionable – London ladies liked them at At Homes'.[45] Joseph Conrad, he declared in a gloss on the conclusion of *Heart of Darkness*, 'loses virtue when he touches a woman', betraying an 'intense and inferior chivalry' probably traceable to his 'Polish legacy'; 'Poetry and common sense throw up the sponge together when she of the high white forehead looms' (*Commonplace Book*, p. 173). Though sympathetic biographers like Nicola Beauman have laboured to absolve Forster of misogyny, passages like the following reveal a suppressed rage at a society where male eroticism seemed regularly pre-empted.[46] 'Women have got out of hand', he complained in 1930:

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[44] Italian Notebooks, Forster Papers, Kings College Library, Cambridge University, quoted in Rose Macaulay, *The Writings of E. M. Forster* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1938), pp. 70–77.

[45] E. M. Forster, *Arctic Summer and Other Fiction*, ed. by Elizabeth Heine (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1980), p. 183; further citations in text. Forster described his abortive novel provisionally titled *Arctic Summer* as 'a contrast again . . . its chief figure a knight errant born too late in our time . . . our age demands patient good-hearted labour, not chivalry' (*Letters*, I, 187). For an insightful treatment of the chivalric obsession in one of Forster's contemporaries, see M. D. Allen, *The Medievalism of Lawrence of Arabia* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991).

[46] Beauman argues that Forster's 'misogyny was an affectation, one which bound him more deeply to the misogynist brotherhood of which he longed so passionately to be a part' (p. 103), and some feminist critics have commended Forster's presentation of women (see, for example, Heine's introduction to *Arctic Summer*, especially p. xxii;

> Twenty years ago I . . . spoke with false enthusiasm of women's rights. She shall have all she wants, I can still get away from her, I thought. I grudged her nothing except my company. But it has gone further, like the degradation of rural England: this afternoon (Sunday in April) all the young men had women with them in farflung cameraderie. If women ever wanted to be by themselves all would be well. But I don't believe they ever want to be . . . and their instinct is never to let men be by themselves. This, I begin to see, is sex war [...]. (*Commonplace Book*, pp. 59–60)

This entry signals Forster's still smoldering irritation at the suffrage movement, of which he was personally aware through his associations with the Bloomsbury circle and the political activities of Christabel Meredith, wife of the dedicatee (H. O. Meredith) of *A Room with a View*.[47] As social and literary historians of the period document, male homosexuals were frequently as threatened by turn-of-the-century feminism as were other men; Bram Dijkstra states that 'much of the strong homosexual impulse in the culture of the period expressed itself in an arrogant siding with the dominant male heterosexual assertion of the inherent superiority of the male in all things'.[48] To compound matters, the armoured figure on horseback of chivalrous iconography had now resurfaced in feminist representations of Joan of Arc, as Elaine Showalter notes, 'an archetypal figure of holy and righteous militance';[49] even in its newer incarnations, women's power seemed self-authorized by the Middle Ages.

Though Forster enjoyed long friendships with women like Virginia Woolf and Florence Barger, he remained far from any generalized

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also Bonnie Blumenthal, *Forster's Women: Eternal Differences* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1975]). For opposing views, see King, p. 29; Furbank, I, 186, 192–93. Forster's misogyny is explored by Elizabeth Langland, 'Gesturing towards an Open Space: Gender, Form and Language in *Howards End*', in Tambling, pp. 81–99. See also Ronald Hyam, *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), p. 19.

[47] See Furbank, I, 186.

[48] Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of Perversity: Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin de Siècle Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 205. See also Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man's Land: The Place of Women Writers in the Twentieth Century*, 2 vols (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), I, 4; Sedgwick too argues that the newly assertive woman of the turn of the century threatened the entrenched homosociality of most contemporary institutions and professions (cited in Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy: Gender and Culture at the Fin de Siècle* [New York: Viking, 1990], p. 178).

[49] Showalter, p. 29. Furbank (I, 180) quotes a 1910 letter by Forster: 'Lay the blame where one will . . . the Suffragettes are becoming a real danger . . . . It is difficult for an outsider to settle at what point physical force becomes justifiable'.

sympathy with women – apart, perhaps, from those of an older generation, to whom he willingly showed, as he did in years of filial service to his mother, 'the chivalry youth owes to age' (*A Room with a View*, p. 200). Among the more distressing residual documents of his personal life is the chastened memoir of their relationship by May Buckingham, who learned to share her husband's affections with Forster: 'I am by nature bossy, as he claimed all women are [...]. He helped me to realise this and try to be less so'.[50]

Medieval and classical in Forster's fiction

Forster's animus against the Middle Ages pervades the whole course of his fiction, invariably placed in tension with classical norms: without exception, I insist, medieval images function as signposts of noxious influence. The paradigm is evident from his first story, 'The Story of a Panic' (1902), where fourteen-year-old Eustace enters an Italian forest to find not the image of Christ, as did the saint for whom he is named, but the goat-god Pan; it is plotted blatantly in one of Forster's late stories, 'The Classical Annex', as boys couple among sculptured nudes while the museum caretaker cowers in a Christian sarcophagus, vessel of the buried flesh.[51] In Forster's longer fiction this serviceable formula determines both structural and social conflict: Forster will typically create an upper middle-class set impelled by medievalism, then contrast, threaten, or violently subvert that set by the intrusion of a social inferior defined in terms of classicism.

A Room with a View provides the *locus classicus* of this configuration. Medievalist ideology defines the novel's antagonistic authority figures, who struggle throughout a holiday in Italy to impede a sexual vitality expressly associated with the country's classical

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[50] May Buckingham, 'Some Reminiscences', in *E. M. Forster: Interviews and Recollections*, ed. by J. H. Stape (New York: St Martin's Press, 1993), p. 77; also included in G. K. Das and John Beer, eds., *E. M. Forster: A Human Exploration* (New York: New York University Press, 1979), p. 183. Bob Buckingham's relationship with Forster is commented on most recently by Martin and Piggford, p. 14; see also King, pp. 81–85.

[51] 'The Story of a Panic', in E. M. Forster, *The Celestial Omnibus and Other Writings* (1947; repr. New York: Vintage Books, 1976), pp. 3–38; 'The Classical Annex', in E. M. Forster, *The Life to Come and Other Short Stories* (New York: Norton, 1972), pp. 146–50. On the turn-of-the-century Pan cult, see Patricia Merivale, *Pan the Goat-God: His Myth in Modern Times* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969); for comments on Forster's response to the figure of Pan, see King, p. 32; Lago, p. 132; and Glen Cavaliero, *A Reading of E. M. Forster* (New York: Macmillan, 1979), pp. 38–58.

origins.[52] Spinsterly Charlotte Bartlett rejoices that 'chivalry is not yet dead' (p. 75); the Rev Mr Beebe, who has remained celibate 'from rather profound reasons', is pointedly described as 'a knight errant' (pp. 132, 186); the Rev Mr Cuthbert Eager, who deplores the pastoral dalliance of his Italian driver, particularly admires a series of monographs (p. 60) entitled 'Mediaeval Byways' (probably suggested by the J. M. Dent series 'Mediaeval Towns')[53] and reveres the chastity of St Francis (p. 23). Mr Eager has conspicuously read his Ruskin, echoing principles from 'The Nature of Gothic' in his description of Santa Croce, 'built by faith in the full fervour of medievalism, before any taint of the Renaissance had appeared' (p. 22).

Accordingly, a conflict between medieval and classical underscores the novel's central problem, Lucy Honeychurch's choice of a husband. True to form, her fiancé Cecil Vyse sustains the false pattern, the 'worn-out chivalry of sex' (p. 200); he 'always felt', Forster's narrator tells us, 'that he must lead women, though he knew not whither, and protect them, though he knew not against what' (p. 132). Lucy, on the other hand, instinctively resists identification with 'the mediaeval lady' who 'reigned in many an early Victorian castle and was queen of much early Victorian song' (pp. 39–40). Lucy's recognition that she loves not Cecil but the vital George Emerson – who in tacit rejection of his medieval name 'lacks chivalry' and appears to her 'like someone in a book [...]. Heroes, gods' (pp. 44, 77) – therefore ushers in 'The End of the Middle Ages', Forster's caption for the final chapter. Unlike those who repudiate 'Eros and Pallas Athene' (p. 174), we are given to understand, Lucy and George will proceed into adult life with the intellectual honesty and respect for the senses personified in the deities of the Greeks. Defeated, Cecil and Mr Beebe recoil from the prospect of a trip to Greece, a place Mr Beebe has described as, like the god Pan, 'either godlike or devilish – I am not sure which'; Greece, Cecil sadly agrees, 'is not for our little lot' (pp. 44, 77). The polarization of the two epochs could hardly be more pronounced; many more examples might be cited. Forster frames the novel, then, as an intentional debunking of medievalism, a cultural deprogramming whereby 'chivalry' and its accrued associations may be exposed and put to rout.

To one degree or another, Forster's other novels thematically replicate this pattern. In Forster's first novel *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1903), for example, 'chivalry' is evident from the first scene,

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[52] Dellamora cites the late nineteenth-century 'commodification' of classical culture 'in the form of sexual tourism', particularly as refigured in the Baron von Gloeden's photographs 'of young Sicilian peasants in the ungarb of ancient youth' (p. 93).

[53] On Forster's association with the 'Mediaeval Towns' series, see Furbank, I, 94.

which finds gentleman at a railway station rushing about to find footwarmers for the ladies, to the last, where the ineffectual and unfulfilled Philip Herriton hastens to close the windows of a coach to keep flying cinders from the eyes of his sister Harriet.[54] When word comes back from Italy of Herriton's widowed sister-in-law Lilia's abrupt marriage to a crude dentist's son, Gino Carella, and the marriage subsequently founders, the Herritons predictably marshal their moral authority by branding Gino as 'unchivalrous' – though, as Philip observes, 'Italians never were chivalrous from the first'(p. 78). In an automatic cultural reflex Philip attempts the obligatory knightly posture: 'I've come to rescue you', he tells Lilia in diction smacking of muscular Christianity and the public schools. 'I'm not frightened of standing up to a bully [...]. He will be different when he sees that he has a man to deal with'. But Forster immediately subverts the expected scenario: Lilia's 'gallant defender', as Forster ironically terms Philip, finds his damsel preferring her distress, and himself, as indicated in a wrestling scene now widely recognized as obliquely erotic, strongly attracted to the vital Gino.

Unlike *A Room with a View*, his only true comedy, Forster's other novels compound the medieval-classical dialectic with an added element of gender antagonism: medieval versus classical, spirit versus body, refigure intermittently as female versus male. In *Angels*, Harriet is a self-righteous and ultimately murderous woman inspired by martial texts from the Old Testament, and Lilia's fatal error has been her opposition to the markedly homosocial 'democracy of the caffé' preferred by Gino to the 'tea-parties – men and women together' (pp. 36, 41) she has urged, effectively the 'destruction of Club Life' by women of which Forster later complained in his *Commonplace Book* (pp. 92–3).[55] Gender conflict is more pronounced in *The Longest Journey* (1907), which from its dedication, 'Fratribus', pictures male bonding at Cambridge in a romantic wash of classical allusion, with Rickie Elliott reading Theocritus, 'whom he believed to be the greatest of Greek poets', and spending the day with male friends, 'people whom he liked'.[56] Rickie's medieval nemesis appears in Agnes

[54] E. M. Forster, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, ed. by Oliver Stallybrass, vol. 1 of the Abinger Edition of the Writings of E. M. Forster (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1975); citations in text.

[55] 'One can run away from women, turn them out, or give in to them. No fourth course. 'Men sometimes want to be without women. Ah why is the converse not equally true? ("Yes – it is – don't you be so conceited" – even as I write I hear their insincere unfriendly shriek.) Destruction of Club Life. Women will not rest until it is complete'.

[56] E. M. Forster, *The Longest Journey*, ed. by Elizabeth Heine, vol. 2 of the Abinger Edition of the Writings of E. M. Forster (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1977), p. 15; further citations in text.

Pembroke, whose house at Sawston 'breathed a certain amount of taste', with pictures of the Madonna and 'a replica of the Hermes of Praxiteles – of course only the bust' (p. 33). Despite Forster's playful tone, the decor is telling: the presence of the Madonna, eternal virgin and idealization of the feminine, serves to emasculate and indeed discorporate the paradigm of maleness, as well as neutralizing the encoded sexuality of Greek art. Rickie's own room contains similarly polarized images, not only the Demeter of Cnidus but an unidentified painting by G. F. Watts (p. 8), whose obsession with Sir Galahad and chivalric virtue determined his themes.[57]

Banked thus between tangible expressions of classical and medieval, Rickie succumbs to the latter and marries Agnes, who inexorably brings him down, first by undermining the classical inspiration of his fiction ('How could Rickie, or anyone, make a living by pretending that Greek gods were alive, or that young ladies could vanish into trees') and urging 'out-and-out love stories' with a now familiar theme: 'The soul and the body. The soul's what matters' (pp. 151, 141). Skillfully she manipulates Rickie into a pedestrian career as a schoolteacher: Sawston School, as might have been expected, is a 'bland Gothic building' (p. 155) run by Agnes's brother, who deprecates the Greeks because they 'lacked spiritual insight, and had a low contempt of women' (p. 46).

In line with his standard formula, Forster counters Agnes with Rickie's illegitimate half-brother Stephen Wonham, more to be reckoned with than Gino and more openly misogynistic: 'He despises us women', Agnes complains (p. 95). Endowed with the 'natural candour of the Greek' (p. 303) and writing raucous verses that improbably parallel 'a beautiful idyll by Theocritus' (p. 112), Stephen is also bluntly antimedieval, ridiculing Salisbury Cathedral and refusing to enter it (p. 115).[58] By contrast, Leonard Bast in *Howards End* (1910), who might have joined ranks with Gino, Stephen, and George Emerson, is already too contaminated for the role of classical challenger by a painfully acquired medievalism he rightly associates with social mobility. Bast's efforts at self-improvement have focused

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[57] On Watts, see Girourard, pp. 150–54; Marilynn Lincoln Board, 'Modernizing the Grail Quest: Gender, Theology, and Allegory in the Iconography of G. F. Watts', *Studies in Medievalism* VII, *Medievalism in England II* (1995), 143–54. Useful information on the sources of Forster's Hellenism is provided in Susan Grove Hall, *Victorian and Edwardian Hellenism in E. M. Forster's Fiction* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms, 1980), and her 'Among E. M. Forster's Idylls; "The Curate's Friend"', *Classical and Modern Literature*, 3.2 (Winter 1983), 99–105.

[58] See Forster's comments on Salisbury Cathedral (and on William Golding's novel *The Spire*, inspired by the cathedral) in his *Commonplace Book*, p. 248.

on, in addition to Beethoven, the medieval signifiers we have learned in Forster's fiction to distrust, the works of Ruskin and 'some pictures by Watts', and the contemporary discourse of chivalry has rubbed off as well: 'I'm not one of your weak-kneed chaps. If a woman's in trouble, I don't leave her in the lurch'.[59] Awkwardly placed between classes, Leonard is already divided, having 'lost the life of the body and failed to reach the life of the spirit' (p. 113).

This is presumably what renders him vulnerable to the combined forces of the Wilcox and Schlegel families, social superiors again defined by their capitulation to the medieval. As a gentleman, Henry Wilcox's psychological dependency on the chivalric paradigm is evident from the beginning of his relationship with Margaret Schlegel ('I just won't have you going about it the dark'); after impulsively kissing her he hurries away 'as if ashamed' (pp. 179–80). Henry's self-division is revealed when Margaret learns of his earlier affair with Jacky, a ludicrous caricature of female vulgarity, and Forster's narration illuminates the predictable path to Henry's destruction:

> Whether as boy, husband, or widower, he had always the sneaking belief that bodily passion is bad, a belief that is desirable only when held passionately. Religion had confirmed him. The words that were read aloud on Sunday to him and to other respectable men were the words that had once kindled the souls of St Catharine and St Francis into a white-hot hatred of the carnal. He could not be as the saints and love the Infinite with seraphic ardour, but he was a little ashamed of loving a wife. (p. 183)

Henry's salvation, Forster tells us in his famous (and too often decontextualized) epigram, would be to 'only connect' the polarities of his being (p. 194); unfortunately it is too late for Henry, to whom, the narrative voice pronounces, 'unchastity and infidelity were as confused [...] as to the Middle Ages, his only moral teacher' (p. 256).[60]

Screens and codes were hardly necessary in *Maurice*, the private exploration of homosexual relations he drafted between 1913 and 1915, but even here Forster brought his classical-medieval hobbyhorse

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[59] E. M. Forster, *Howards End*, ed. by Oliver Stallybrass, vol. 4 of the Abinger Edition of the Writings of E. M. Forster (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1973), pp. 47, 50–51.

[60] Margaret Schlegel's location in the classical-medieval configuration is problematic. On the one hand, she rejects her sister Helen's brooding over the soul-body dichotomy as 'mediaeval', and insists, 'our business is not to contrast the two, but to reconcile them'. On the other hand, she acknowledges that that binarism 'is true, of course' (p. 104). When Margaret's discovery of Henry's former affair with Jacky drives him to humiliation, she 'plays the girl, until he could rebuild his fortress and hide his soul from the world' (p. 246), images smacking of the castle and cloister.

out for yet another run.[61] Rather like Forster himself, Maurice Hall forms an early association between classicism and the awakening of sex: 'While at his grandfather's he came across an unexpurgated Martial, and stumbled about in it with burning ears' (p. 23).[62] At Cambridge Maurice feels 'a yokel in Athens' (p. 57), and his youthful love for Clive Durham develops in tandem with his reading of Plato's *Symposium* (pp. 51, 58, 64). To Maurice, suddenly enlightened, the implications of 'Greek' are now specifically homoerotic: 'I have always been like the Greeks and didn't know' (p. 65).

The foregrounding of classicism is obvious in this novel, but once again medievalism is invoked again as its cultural dark side: the phrase 'Mediaeval Darkness', though casually mentioned (p. 33), rings as fully intentional. Clive confesses an emotion toward Maurice in terms straight out of Forster's entrenched dialectic: 'body and soul, no starved mediaevalism of course, only a particular harmony of body and soul that I don't think women have even guessed' (p. 90). Provocative too is the charge of women's sexual ignorance and distaste: having fallen in love with Clive, Maurice finds his all-female family newly irritating ('Home emasculated everything' [p. 52]), and Clive's mother, who tries to dissuade her son from a trip to Greece, is frankly odious ('He understood why Clive should have come to despise her' [pp. 95, 89]). As in Forster's other books, however, the women in *Maurice* enjoy a social elevation and immunity from criticism enjoined by the protocol of chivalry – a concept lined up with similarly dubious bourgeois virtues like 'punctuality, courtesy, patriotism' (p. 141). This is established when Maurice's schoolmaster nervously explains sex in chastely chivalrous terms: 'He sketched the glory of Woman. [...] To love a noble woman, to protect and serve her – this, he told the little boy, was the crown of life' (pp. 14–15). Resisting his mother's submissive tactics when he is reprimanded for a minor infraction at school, Maurice is condemned as 'a disgrace to chivalry' (p. 85). Chivalry is also blamed for Maurice's eventual loss of Clive: having become 'normal', to use Clive's own word (p. 116), Clive quickly slips into accepted behavioral grooves, for 'chivalry had awoken at last', and 'to Woman was his first duty' (pp. 129–30).

Maurice's ultimate adoption of a new life with his rustic lover Alec Scudder places him in open opposition to conventionally heterosexual society. Even with so conclusive a statement of principle, however, Forster does not forego his habitual attack on the standard signifiers of the Middle Ages. When Clive reads aloud from the final canto of Dante's *Paradiso*, 'about the three rainbow circles that intersect, and

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[61] E. M. Forster, *Maurice: A Novel* (New York: Norton, 1971); citations in text.

[62] See Furbank, I, 36.

between their junctions is enshadowed a human face', the face of God (p. 49), Maurice connects the passage with his private vision, described earlier: 'Was he a Greek god, such as illustrates the classical dictionary? More probable, but most probably he was just a man' (22). The Christian and Dantean interpretation of the face at the centre is deliberately obliterated, first by the Greek god, then by the man of flesh anticipating Scudder. Another medieval mythos suffers summary displacement as Maurice merges the legends of Robin Hood with an earlier historical paradigm: 'It strikes me there may have been something about the Greeks – Theban Band – and the rest of it' (p. 212). As Philip Gardner has pointed out, this passage as published contains an eyeskip: in manuscript it reads, 'It strikes me there may have been more in that Robin Hood business than meets the eye. One knows about the Greeks – Theban Band – and the rest of it'.[63] This discovery contextualizes the novel's most celebrated image, the 'greenwood':[64] 'Perhaps among those who took to the greenwood in old time there had been two men like himself – two' (p. 135).

Chivalry and Dante, Forster's ancient enemies, have again been put to flight, and the Merry Men have expelled Maid Marian. The Oriental setting of *A Passage to India* (1924) might have obviated Forster's obsessive historical references; Forster sets out to show, however, that the British Raj had dragged in chivalry along with the other trappings of western civilization.[65] While the Indian attitude toward sex is depicted as practical (p. 49), the English stubbornly maintain their chivalry, as we see when Fielding is warned not to leave Adela Quested alone: 'I don't like to see an English girl left smoking with two Indians' (p. 70). A dogged chivalry drives the trial of Dr. Aziz, accused of assaulting Adela:

> They had started speaking of 'women and children' – that phrase that exempts the male from sanity when it had been repeated a few times. Each felt that all he loved best in the world was at stake, demanded revenge, and was filled with a not unpleasing glow, in which the chilly and half-known features of Miss Quested vanished, and were replaced by all that is sweetest and warmest in the private life. (p. 174)

Nevertheless, as another character admits, 'It's our women who make everything more difficult out here', and 'beneath his chivalry to Miss

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[63] Philip Gardner, 'The Evolution of Forster's *Maurice*', in Herz and Martin, p. 286.

[64] See, for example, George Steiner, 'Under the Greenwood Tree', *New Yorker*, 9 October 1971, 158–69, repr. in *E. M. Forster: The Critical Heritage*, ed. by Philip Gardner (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 475–82.

[65] E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India*, vol. 6 of the Abinger Edition of the Writings of E. M. Forster (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1973); citations in text.

Quested', Forster adds, 'resentment lurked, waiting its day – perhaps there is a grain of resentment in all chivalry' (p. 204).

Forster challenges this chivalry not this time with classicism, but with something he evidently perceived as very like it: India easily translated into the Hellenic mode. When Forster's friend R. C. Trevelyan, who accompanied him to India in 1912, saw white-draped figures approaching the shore, he imagined he was in ancient Greece, and Forster's friend Joe Ackerley reported in his book *Hindoo Holiday* how his Indian patron hoped 'the Greeks might be reborn in Chatarpur'.[66] The budding friendship between Aziz and Fielding, inspired by Forster's affection for the novel's dedicatee Syed Ross Masood, suggests moreover what Forster's cultural indoctrination implied and his own experience confirmed: that satisfactory relations between men were possible only in a still pagan world.

Millennium

Unwilling to resign himself to the social domination of medievalism, Forster seems early in his career to have begun sketching a countervision of classical return, not merely in individual Pan figures but as a projected new era and dispensation. Though the village of Monteriano in *Angels* must be reached by traveling 'up eight miles of excellent road into the Middle Ages', its history is significantly multilayered: its name springs from the 'Mons Rianus of Antiquity' etymologically brooding below the surface (pp. 15, 12). In Forster's fantasy, one gathers, England was similarly as pagan at base: fauns might turn up in any country, he observed in 'The Curate's Friend', 'which has beechclumps and sloping grass, and very clear streams'.[67] In *The Longest Journey*, Salisbury Cathedral is 'only a Gothic upstart' beside the timeless villages surrounding it, where 'generations before she was built they were clinging to the soil, and renewing it with sheep and dogs and men, who founded the crisis of their lives upon Stonehenge' (p. 247). The symbolic Cadbury Rings in the same novel (Forster's name for the Figsbury Rings, prehistoric earthworks) evoke a much older England, whose inhabitants 'worshipped Mars or Pan – Erda perhaps' (p. 129). In *Howards End*, the Hilton railway station is situated near 'six Danish tumuli that stood shoulder to shoulder along

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[66] Furbank, I, 24; Ackerley is quoted in Neville Braybrook's introduction to *The Ackerley Letters* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1975). See also Martin and Piggford, p. 22.

[67] 'The Curate's Friend', *Celestial Omnibus*, p. 113. See also Robert K. Martin, 'Edward Carpenter and the Double Structure of *Maurice*', in Tambling, p. 103.

the high road, tombs of soldiers' (pp. 12–13) – a still palpable pre-Christian reality poised to supplant the social order from beneath.

Juxtaposed with his persistent classicism, the futuristic intimations in several of Forster's writings fall into sharper focus as a millennial supersession of the medieval and reinstatement of a classical social order. Before the mystic male bathing scene in *A Room with a View*, Mr Emerson holds forth on the social barriers between the sexes, citing men's less fastidious physicality and waxing eloquent about the future: 'The Garden of Eden [...] which you place in the past, is really yet to come. We shall enter it when we no longer despise our bodies', and then men and women will at last be, in his ambiguous word, 'comrades' (p. 126). Emerson's notion adumbrates passages in *Howards End*. The birth rate is declining, Leonard Bast is informed early on: 'If this kind of thing goes on the population of England will be stationary in 1960' (p. 45). This gloomy prognostication may be taken to suggest, as in *The Waste Land*, a lamentable sterility in modern society, but it also implies an obviation of marriage, which in present conditions cuts out homosocial 'comradeship' (p. 171). In an earlier version of the novel the seemingly central concept of 'home' is called in question, and with a provocatively medieval parallel. 'Home itself is only an unreal value that we give to certain prospects', Forster drafted. 'Home sustains as did the Mediaeval heaven [...]. When it passes, as it must before cosmopolitanism, there will be no sanctity left [...].' This is surely ambiguous, but Forster projects a presumably desirable superannuation of 'home' in the next lines: then, he writes, 'our only support will be pure human passion, and then will come the testing moment of our race'.[68] 'We are evolving', Margaret Schlegel observes in the published version, 'in ways that Science cannot measure, to ends that Theology dares not contemplate'. Again, Forster leaves this assertion vague, but Margaret 'would even admit a biological change' (p. 75). What 'biological change' can be envisioned here, if not an alteration of the procreative interdependency of the sexes? Bram Dijkstra has outlined *fin-de-siècle* appropriations of Darwin's notion of a primitive androgynous ancestor, and it is known from the records of Forster's friends that he wanted a child and chafed against his disbarment from paternity.[69] Brought to its logical termination, then, Forster's nearly lifelong classicism seems ultimately to have grown from a war on the Middle Ages to a frustration with the dictates of nature itself.

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[68] E. M. Forster, *The Manuscripts of Howards End*, vol. 4b of the Abinger Edition of the Writings of E. M. Forster (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1973), p. 181 (stikeouts and insertion marks have been deleted).

[69] Dijkstra, pp. 160–73; Furbank, II, 184.

Forster's biographer P. N. Furbank observes that Forster 'received his whole inspiration – a vision, a kind of plot, a message – all at once, in early manhood'.[70] Furbank does not elaborate here, but it now seems clear that that 'plot or message' depended heavily upon the novelist's absorption of the historical discourse of his youth, a discourse so culturally insistent that it set the dualistic terms of his life struggle and underlay their expression in his fiction. With the end of the Great War, however, the 'worn-out chivalry of sex' was indeed worn out anyway, and its obsolescence coincided, perhaps not surprisingly, with the early cessation of Forster's career as a novelist. From midlife on, as society altered around him, he seemed to lack inspiration, permitting his fictive talent to dissipate into private erotic bagatelles. Yet even these draw regularly on the medieval-classical polarities, and while his comfortable life and freedom from scandal testify to the security he enjoyed, the protraction of Forster's engagement with dated historical constructs reveals a bitterness belying the tone of philosophical detachment affected in his narration. In the posthumous story 'Little Imber' (*Arctic Summer*, pp. 226–35), probably Forster's last imaginative exercise, medieval and classical, female and male, contend one last time: a conventicle of brood females, presided over by an 'Abbess', is rendered unnecessary by the ritual copulation of males in 'pagan groves' (p. 235), now so efficacious it generates offspring. The setting, recalling the evolutionary references in *Howards End*, is in the future, but the title character takes his name from Virgil: 'Imber', we are informed, is Latin and designates 'a fertilizing shower'.[71] In the realm of private fantasy, Forster continued to the end to vent his long-nursed anger against the rejection his culture taught him was imposed by history: on a note of grim if futile satisfaction, the story concludes tersely, 'Males had won' (p. 235). Like others of his generation, and let us admit of our own, Forster appropriated medievalism and classicism – available at last to scholars as powerful heuristic tools – at their intersection with what he called 'the secret life, which each of us lives privately':[72] a site where the sovereign imagination, for artist and scholar alike, continues to construct a past it can call home.

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[70] Furbank, II, 132.

[71] Forster implies Virgil's homosexuality in his introduction to *The Aeneid of Virgil*, trans. by E. Fairfax Taylor, ed. by Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson and H. O. Meredith (London: Dent, 1916), pp. ix–x.

[72] E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel* (1927; repr. New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1985), p. 83.

RECONSTRUCTING THE MIDDLE AGES: THE MONK'S SERMON IN *THE SEVENTH SEAL*

WILLIAM D. PADEN

> It is axiomatic that every generation has to write its own history of the past, and this is especially true in the case of the Middle Ages. It follows that medievalism, the study of this process, is a necessary part of the study of the Middle Ages [...]. It seems clear that medievalism, being concerned with process rather than product, is a particularly fruitful area for several forms of postmodern criticism.— Leslie J. Workman[1]

1. Memory

ONE MAY CONSIDER INGMAR BERGMAN'S film *The Seventh Seal*[2] as history – as a particular, partial, but surprisingly faithful view of the Middle Ages. In an acknowledged masterpiece, a gifted artist may represent an understanding of the past that is as influential in its way as the professional understanding of an historian, and as vital to cultural memory. In this essay I shall draw upon memory as a model or synecdoche for history; while history is communal and memory is individual, one may assume that they work in similar ways.

The phenomenon of false memory has become familiar to psychologists. For Daniel L. Schacter, false memory is useful for an understanding of memory in general, which involves two fundamental components: an engram, or physical trace of an earlier experience which is preserved in the brain; and a cue which sets in motion a process of retrieval. The engram alone does not account for ordinary memory judged to be correct, or faithful to past experience; rather, ordinary memory involves the interaction between cue and engram, which, working together, produce the experience of recollection.3

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[1] 'Medievalism', single leaf (Holland, Michigan: the author, 1995).

[2] *Det Sjunde Inseglet* (Svensk Filmindustri, 1956).

[3] 'The brain engages in an act of 'construction' during the retrieval process [...]. The cue combines with the engram to yield a new, emergent entity – the recollective experience of the rememberer – that differs from either of its constituents': Schacter, *Searching for Memory: The Brain, the Mind, and the Past* (New York: Basic Books, 1996), pp. 66, 70.

Memory is not simply retrieval, but reconstruction.4 We know this because in false memory the role of the cue somehow outweighs or overcomes the role of the engram, and we experience memory which seems to be vivid, cogent, and compellingly true, but is not true, because the engram has been modified in the process of recollection. If history works like memory, a trace of past experience, archival or other, must interact with a present cue to produce recollection. Analogous to false memory is false history, images of the past that have been distorted by intervening experience but may have the cogency of true memory. False history shows the role played by intervening experience even in the construction of true history.

Bergman's film presents a converse case – a case in which Bergman has reconstituted the past more faithfully than available traces gave him any apparent means to do. The cue has overshot the engram but not falsified it; rather it hit engrams available to us but not, in all likelihood, known to the filmmaker. Call it intuition, if you will, or hyperrealism, but not mere coincidence because, according to my argument, the creative process by which Bergman worked was an extension of the reconstructive process of normal memory or history. Bergman produced an image of the Middle Ages more faithful than he can have known. The case may help us understand the place of the Middle Ages in modern memory.

2. *The Seventh Seal*

The Seventh Seal traces the return to Sweden of a knight, Antonius Block, accompanied by his squire, Jöns, from a ten-year crusade in the Holy Land. The film begins just after Block and Jöns arrive on the beach, where Block begins a chess game with a personified figure of Death. They soon discover that Sweden is wracked by the terror of bubonic plague. The camera follows their journey overland and their encounters with a number of people on the road, including a procession of flagellants and a young woman who is burned as a witch, until finally Death wins the chess game, the travellers reach the knight's castle, and Death comes to claim them all.

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[4] The pioneer in reconstructive memory was Frederic C. Bartlett, who concluded that 'Remembering is not the re-excitation of innumerable fixed, lifeless and fragmentary traces. It is an imaginative reconstruction, or construction, built out of the relation of our attitude towards a whole active mass of organized past reactions or experiences, and to a little outstanding detail which commonly appears in image or in language form': *Remembering: A Study in Experimental and Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932; repr. 1995), p. 213.

On their way Block and Jöns stop to watch a theatrical performance by a troupe of actors. Jof, the juggler, plays the lute as his wife Mia beats a drum, and they sing an apocalyptic jingle that depicts 'The Black One', a figure of death, dancing, running, or squatting on the shore.[5] Meanwhile, offstage, their fellow player Skat makes love behind a bush with Lisa, the wife of Plog the smith. Suddenly the performance and the lovemaking are interrupted by the noise, and then the spectacle, of a procession of flagellants. Monks wearing the black robes of Dominicans bear a swaying crucifix, coffins, holy relics, and censers emitting thick smoke. After them come men, women, and children scourging themselves and each other with whips and howling in pain or ecstasy. In the words of the screenplay:

> They twist in pain; their eyes bulge wildly; their lips are gnawed to shreds and dripping with foam. They have been seized by madness. They bite their own hands and arms, whip each other in violent, almost rhythmic outbursts. Throughout it all the shrill song howls from their bursting throats. (38)

The song is *Dies irae*, the 'Day of Wrath' or sequence for the dead. The procession pauses, and the penitents sink to the ground.

A monk rises and speaks, his voice 'thick with impotent scorn' (39). He begins by stating his theme: 'God has sentenced us to punishment. We shall all perish in the black death.' Then he addresses a series of groups or individuals in the crowd, insulting each one with sneering sarcasm:

> You, standing there like gaping cattle ... ; You who stand staring like a goat ... ; You, woman, who bloom with life and self-satisfaction ... ; You back there, with your swollen nose and stupid grin. ...

He asks each one if he, she, or they realize that they may soon die, because God has sentenced them. To the first group he says:

> You, standing there like gaping cattle, you who sit there in your glutted complacency, do you know that this may be your last hour? Death stands right behind you. I can see how his crown gleams in the sun. His scythe flashes as he raises it above your heads. Which one of you shall he strike first?

He punctuates his speech with bursts of manic laughter. After repeating that all have been sentenced, he falls silent, then prays for

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[5] This refrain occurs in the subtitles but not in the screenplay; see Bergman, *The Seventh Seal*, trans. by Lars Malmstrom and David Kushner (London: Lorrimer, 1960).

mercy and makes a sign of the cross over the crowd. The *Dies irae* begins again. The other monks rise, as do the flagellants, and the procession moves away.

The camera is now held high above the field. It seems to adopt the point of view of the sea-eagle that appeared in the opening shot of the film, or perhaps it takes the point of view of God. The vantage point makes the flagellants look very small. The shot of the procession dissolves into one of the field they were crossing, now empty. It seems as though the flagellants have disappeared before our eyes.[6]

3. Two Monks

The monk's sermon in the film bears a striking resemblance to a little-known poem by a real medieval monk; since the sermon represents a culmination in Bergman's evocation of medieval spirituality, the film as a whole may be compared with the medieval poem. If a person living in the Middle Ages could have seen the film, he or she might have recognized it as a version of the poem.[7] I am speaking of the *Vers*

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[6] On camera technique I follow Birgitta Steene, 'Outline', in *Focus on the Seventh Seal*, ed. by Steen (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972): 'Overhead shot of train of flagellants. Dissolve. Shot of ground, empty' (p. 148). James F. Scott suggested another way to understand the shot: 'For his most sophisticated effects [Bergman] prefers the dissolve, especially a very slow dissolve which retains the displaced image long enough to make its force operative in the new frame': 'Ingmar Bergman in the 1950s', in *Focus on the Seventh Seal*, pp. 27–28. Scott also suggests considering the final shot as though in a new perspective adopted by Block: 'Before the marchers vanish, a long-range shot from high angle appropriately signifies a new perspective, the one Block has attained now by detaching himself intellectually from the company of the orthodox' (32). For Richard Sonnenshein the scene is a 'vividly realized and historically plausible moment' ('The Problem of Evil in Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*', *Philological Papers*, 27 (1981), 139–41); for Theo Fürstenau, 'In this particular scene, [the film], which in a sinister and piercing way calls in question the existence of God, has its staggering climax [...]; a real incident but also an eery spectacle that borders on the unbelievable' (review of *The Seventh Seal*, in *Focus on the Seventh Seal*, pp. 64–66). For further comments on the sense of historicity Bergman creates in the scene see Peter Cowie, *Ingmar Bergman: A Critical Biography* (New York: Scribner's, 1982), 145–46; Andrew Sarris, '*The Seventh Seal*', in *Focus on the Seventh Seal*, p. 85.

[7] Such an imaginary viewer is a useful device, I believe, for attempting to understand a medieval mindset through identification with its outlook. As an analytic device it is analogous to the practice, in language study, of translating from Old French to English, and then translating the English version back into Old French – which can teach many things about Old French that are not so readily learned by translating more passively from the medieval to the modern language. The imaginary viewer, though of

de la Mort or 'Verses on Death', written in Old French by a Cistercian monk named Hélinant de Froidmont, from the abbey of Froidmont near Beauvais, north of Paris, in the period 1193–1197.[8]

The monastic speaker of Hélinant's poem is analogous to both Bergman's monk and Bergman himself, as maker of the film. Like Bergman, Hélinant personifies the figure of Death. He tells Death to go to a series of people, friends of his and powerful churchmen, to remind them that they will die and to urge them to repent (*Memento mori*). Again like Bergman, Hélinant depicts Death carrying a scythe (stanza 12); in another passage Hélinant says that Death 'never loses a game by making a bad move' (stanza 28), perhaps referring to the game of chess that Bergman depicts so graphically. Hélinant's poem contains the germ of the Dance of Death, which was first depicted in frescoes in the fifteenth century and later provided Bergman with the unforgettable closing shot of the film. Antonius Block, Jöns, and their fellow travellers dance in silhouette against the sky as they follow their new master, Death.[9]

The two sermons resemble one another in style and emotional tone as well as in substance. Hélinant writes with an exuberance compounded of apostrophe, anaphora, alliteration, proverbs and allusions; his imagery shifts constantly, creating a dreamlike, almost hallucinatory effect, similar to the effect, in the film, of the monk's near hysterical intensity, compounded by the awful spectacle of the flagellants, the smoke of censers and the drone of the sequence – properly used of the dead, but here used for the living doomed to die. Bergman twice attains effects of otherworldly perception that are comparable to Hélinant's vision of death and justice: once when Jof the juggler has a vision of the Virgin and child, shared by the camera and the spectator; and later, when Jof and his family, terrified of a storm at night, ride their wagon through the forest as the angel of death passes over them.

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course impossible, can be very useful, just as the imaginary number (the square root of minus one) is useful, even indispensable, in mathematics; see C. C. MacDuffee, 'Arithmetic', *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edn (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1997), XIV, 75.

[8] Ed. by Fr. Wulff and Em. Walberg, Société des Anciens Textes Français (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1905). Trans. William D. Paden, *Allegorica* 3.2 (1978), 62–103.

[9] Emile Mâle asks, 'Cette mort qui va à Rome prendre les cardinaux, à Reims, l'archevèque, à Beauvais, l'évèque, qui s'empare du roi, du pauvre, de l'usurier, du jouvenceau, de l'enfant, cette mort que le poète appelle "la main qui tout agrape", n'a-t-elle pas déjà l'air de conduire une danse macabre?', in *L'art religieux de la fin du Moyen Age en France*, 6th edn (Paris: Armand Colin, 1969), 360–61. On the first frescoes of the Dance of Death see Larry Silver, 'Danse macabre', *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. by Joseph R. Strayer (New York: Scribner's, 1982–89), IV, 93.

The urgency of Hélinant's tone rises to a peak when he brushes against heresy. He says that the exploitation of the poor by the rich proves one of two things: either that God does not exist, or that He will judge the high and the low (stanza 43). He adds that if the evil rich could get away without judgment, he himself would declare in the middle of church that God had no justice at all (stanza 48).[10] In his indignation at the wrongs committed or countenanced by unworthy churchmen and in his rage to deter or punish them by dispatching Death with his terrifying message, Hélinant reaches a pitch of excitement verging on the frenzy of Bergman's monk, with his mad, scornful, bitter laughter.

The two sermons differ in their superficial rhetorical structure, since Hélinant speaks directly to Death, while Bergman's monk speaks directly to the members of his audience. Accordingly, Hélinant speaks about living sinners in the third person, and the monk in the film refers in the third person to Death. But the two works are alike in that both contain a monastic speaker who exhorts his audience to fear and penance, an audience buffeted by the speaker and by Death. Both monks express fear of death and appeal to that fear in their audiences. Although pastoral love may perhaps underlie their attempts to care for souls, the feeling that both monks express overtly toward their listeners is anger – anger at their foolishness, at their sins, at their mortality. Both monks express fear of God and perhaps anger at His injustice and cruelty, but not love. The tone of the film, where the monk speaks in the context of the flagellant procession, is perhaps more hysterical than the tone of the poem. The plague terrifies Bergman's monk and his listeners and makes them feel abjectly powerless; it creates a temptation to despair which is particularly vivid and compelling. But the plague produces no more fanatic rhetorical extremes, by contemporary monastic standards, in the film than the sheer terror of death does in the poem, written a century and a half before the plague struck Europe.

Two further points of resemblance are exterior to the monk's speech and Hélinant's poem. Both performances are associated with the *Dies irae*: Bergman's flagellants sing it during the procession, while Hélinant's poem imitates the metrical structure of the sequence in its form.[11] Finally, much as the monk in the film delivers his

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[10] For commentary on this passage in its historical context see William D. Paden, '*De monachis rithmos facientibus*: Hélinant de Froidmont, Bertran de Born, and the Cistercian General Chapter of 1199', *Speculum*, 55 (1980), 669–85.

[11] Jean-Charles Payen, 'L'*homo viator* et le croisé: La mort et le salut dans la tradition du douzain', *Death in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Herman Braet and Werner Verbeke (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1983), pp. 205–21.

harangue to the people who have gathered to watch the play, Hélinant's poem was read aloud in public.[12]

Bergman's monk functions significantly in the economy of the film. Although he appears neither before nor again, the image of the flagellants is anticipated earlier when Block and Jöns enter a country church, and Jöns encounters a painter working on a mural depicting the plague. In a time of crisis the monk embodies faith become fanatic, in contrast to faith lost, as in the case of Raval, the former seminarist who persuaded Block to go on crusade ten years earlier, but who has now abandoned the priesthood and lives by robbing the corpses of plague victims. The monk's fanaticism and Raval's cynicism frame Block's struggle to deal with his faith under stress.

This function of Bergman's monk, which frames the protagonist's struggle with faith, is not exclusively medieval. A similar pattern may be seen, for example, in *Grapes of Wrath*. Steinbeck depicts the loss of faith in Jim Casy, a former minister, and fanaticism in a fundamentalist woman, Mrs. Sandry, who frame Tom Joad's struggle toward faith in social activism.[13] When Mrs. Sandry's outrage over a dance held in a settlement camp sends her into an epileptic seizure (chapter 22), she recalls the emotional extremity of Bergman's monk. But the two works valorize these similar patterns differently. In the world of the novel the epileptic fundamentalist is clearly wrong because she is cruel to Rose of Sharon, Tom's sister, while the lapsed clergyman, Casy, is portrayed sympathetically as Tom's friend and mentor in the labor movement. In *The Seventh Seal* the lapsed clergyman is a repulsive figure. As for the fanatical monk, under the appalling circumstances of plague he sustains the impetus of the terrible procession; the vivid presence of the plague makes it impossible to dismiss his hysteria as groundless, or even exaggerated in the eyes of the other characters threatened by imminent death in such a gruesome form.

Other characters in the film represent variations on the premises of the monk's twisted but recognizable logic. This logic is essentially based in closure. Under the intense pressure of the conflict between the horrors of plague and belief in a loving and all-powerful God, the

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[12] 'In these times [around 1208] in the territory of Beauvais there was a monk, Hélinant of Froidmont, a religious man and fluent in eloquence, who so elegantly and usefully, as appears clearly by light, composed those "Verses on Death" in our vernacular, which are read in public' ('His temporibus in territorio Belvacensi fuit Helinandus monachus Frigidi Montis, vir religiosus ac facundia disertus, qui et illos versus de morte in vulgari nostro, qui publice leguntur, tam eleganter et utiliter, ut luce clarius patet, composuit'): Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum historiale*, cited in *Patrologia Latina*, ed. Jean-Paul Migne (repr. Turnhout: Brepols, 1969), 212: 478.

[13] John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* (New York: Viking, 1939).

monk clings to every article of his faith and blames evil on sinful man. Raval has found release by jettisoning faith and relapsing into abject inhumanity. Jöns escapes the impasse of faith in a skepticism set off by cocky good fellowship. Block retains sympathy for human suffering but keeps faith, despite his doubts, through to the end of the film, when he prays for mercy for himself and his friends at the moment of their death. To schematize these relationships, we may suggest that the monk believes in God but not in man; that Raval believes in neither; that Jöns believes in man but not in God; and that Block strains to believe in both. Thus Bergman dramatizes the Middle Ages as an era of problematic faith in all its possible combinations. His version of Hélinant, the fanatic monk, is instrumental to the narrative logic of the film.

4. Construction

How did Bergman construct the image of the Middle Ages we see in the film? He directed *The Seventh Seal* in Summer 1956, basing the script on a one-act play he had written the year before called *Wood Painting*.[14] In April 1956 he had directed a radio production of Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Jedermann* (1911),[15] an adaptation of the fifteenth-century English play *Everyman* in which God sends his messenger Death to the protagonist. Like Antonius Block, the protagonist gains a brief respite to make spiritual preparation; a monk appears briefly as the representative of the church, but does not speak. Of course Bergman drew upon a general knowledge of traditions which began in the Middle Ages. As Block says when he first encounters Death on the shore, he knows that Death plays chess because he has seen it painted in pictures and heard it sung in ballads. In a program note to the film Bergman reminisced about visiting

[14] 'Wood Painting: A Morality Play', trans. by Randolph Goodman and Leif Sjöberg, in *Focus on the Seventh Seal*, pp. 159–73. Bergman wrote the play as an exercise for his acting class at Malmö City Theater. 'In the play, the Knight's role is relatively minor; Death does not appear in person; and Squire Jöns dominates the action': Birgitta Steene, *Ingmar Bergman: A Guide to References and Resources* (Boston: Hall, 1987), item 507. The play's title, *Wood Painting*, corresponds to the scene in *The Seventh Seal* in which Jöns encounters the painter in the country church.

[15] Steene, *Ingmar Bergman: A Guide*, item 309. Peter Cowie, 'Ingmar Bergman: A Chronology', in Ingmar Bergman, *The Magic Lantern: An Autobiography*, trans. by Joan Tate (New York: Viking, 1988), p. 296. Hugo von Hofmannsthal, *Jedermann, das Spiel vom Sterben des reichen Mannes* (Berlin: Fischer, 1921); *The Salzburg Everyman: The Play of the Rich Man's Death*, trans. by M. E. Tafler (Salzburg: M. Mora, 1930).

country churches with his parson father and seeing mural paintings which inspired several moments in the film: the crusader playing chess with Death, Skat climbing a tree while Death saws it down, the dance of death moving against a hilly background, the Virgin Mary teaching her child to walk.[16] An obsessive student of Strindberg, Bergman rehearsed his play *The Dance of Death* (1901) in 1975–78 for a production that was never realized.[17] But Strindberg's play, which is resolutely modern in setting and incident, does not explain its own title. More suggestive for the film is Strindberg's *Saga of the Folkungs* (1899), a historical drama set in fourteenth-century Sweden.[18] In the first scene of Act IV a procession of flagellants enters the play, driven by fear of the plague; when they collide with a festival procession of jesters, drummers, pipers, and fiddlers, a bishop attempts to speak over the general confusion, but he is prevented by the noise. Despite their suggestive resemblances to the film, none of these sources goes so far as to anticipate the monk's sermon. The film stands in contrast to the *Saga of the Folkungs* and *Jedermann* precisely because Bergman grants the monk a voice – a voice so much like Hélinant's.

Of course Bergman knew the Bible, and in the film he framed the seemingly inescapable closure of death within the Apocalyptic narrative of the seven seals. We hear this narrative first in the voice-over at the beginning of the film and again at the end, when Block's wife Karin reads aloud from the Bible as all await Death's arrival. The sea-eagle in the opening shot recalls the traditional symbolism of the eagle as Saint John, the author of the book of Revelation.[19] The biblical text read by Karin encloses the film within the historical span from John on Patmos down to the last moment of the doomed little group, enacting the historical fears that the plague would bring the end

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[16] 'A Program Note to the Seventh Seal', in *Focus on The Seventh Seal*, pp. 70–71.

[17] Steene, *Ingmar Bergman: A Guide*, p. 312; in 1976–78 according to Cowie, 'Ingmar Bergman: A Chronology', p. 300. August Strindberg, *Dramas of Testimony: The Dance of Death I and II, Advent, Easter, There Are Crimes and Crimes*, trans. by Walter Johnson (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1975).

[18] *The Saga of the Folkungs; Engelbrekt*, trans. by Walter Johnson (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1959).

[19] 'Then I looked, and I heard an eagle calling with a loud cry as it flew in mid-heaven: "Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth when the trumpets sound which the three last angels must now blow!"' (Revelations 8. 13). The verse repeated in the opening voice-over and by Karin at the end is Revelations 8. 1: 'Now when the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for what seemed half an hour.' The traditional symbolism of the eagle as John, the lion as Mark, the ox as Luke, and the man as Matthew sprang from Revelations 4. 7. On the identification of the bird in the opening shot as a sea-eagle see Birgitta Steene, '*The Seventh Seal*: Film as Doomsday Metaphor', in *Focus on the Seventh Seal*, p. 9 n.

of the world.[20] Likewise the biblical text encloses the viewer's experience of the film – except that the film does not end with the apocalyptic moment, since Jof and Mia escape with their baby Mikael to witness the Dance of Death against the horizon.

Their escape is a release from closure for them and for the viewer, and corresponds to the continuation of history beyond all the successive endings predicted by medieval fears of Apocalypse. The film itself is a product and a proof of that release, a disproof of the seeming ineluctability of the end. The viewer knows with certainty that the dense apocalyptic gloom of the film, which culminates in the death of Block, his wife, and their friends, is wrong, simply because the viewer occupies a vantage point in the twentieth century. The fourteenth century was not the end, and the film is not medieval (not a 'medieval morality play', as it has been called), but a twentieth-century view of the Middle Ages.

Bergman's other film on a medieval subject, *The Virgin Spring*, provides an instructive contrast.[21] Rather than create the scenario for *The Virgin Spring* himself, Bergman used a script by Ulla Isaksson based on a medieval text, a fourteenth-century Swedish legend.[22] Unlike *The Seventh Seal*, *The Virgin Spring* depicts a world that is so small and restricted that it becomes claustrophobic. Instead of a knight returning from the Holy Land across the breadth of Sweden, we have a farmstead within which the Master seeks to exert control. Outside the farmstead lies the wilderness in which his daughter Karin is brutally raped and murdered, but the criminals are led into the farmstead, as

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[20] 'In my view, most who thought about the significance of the plague were millenarians or chiliasts': Robert E. Lerner, 'The Black Death and Western European Eschatalogical Mentalities', in *The Black Death: The Impact of the Fourteenth-Century Plague*, ed. by Daniel Williman (Binghamton, New York: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1982), p. 81. On Apocalypse, the repeated disconfirmation of predicted ends of the world, and their relevance to literary plot, see Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 3–31.

[21] *Jungfrukällan* (Svensk Filmindustri, 1960).

[22] The text of the ballad, '"La fille de Töre à Vänge", tirée d'une légende suédoise du XIVe siècle', has been published in a French version by Ulla Isaksson, 'Introduction à *La Source*', *Cinéma*, 51 (1960), 33–43. In the ballad, the spring appears when the murderers decapitate the girl (which they do not do in the film); they then go to the farm, as in the film, and offer the girl's dress for sale to her mother; the father kills them and vows to build a church in penance for his vengeance. William S. Pechter criticizes Bergman for moving the appearance of the spring to its culminating position in the film: 'The Ballad and the Source', *Kenyon Review*, 23 (1961), 334–35. Isaksson published the story of the film as a novel (*The Virgin Spring* (New York: Ballantine, 1960)); the script has not been published.

though by providence, and it then becomes their prison and the place of their execution. As though by providence, one of them offers to sell Karin's cloak to her mother, and as though by providence an eyewitness to the murder, the pagan girl Ingeri, turns up at the Master's door to confirm what he has surmised. The Master takes it upon himself to act as the instrument of an avenging God. In the most visually arresting image of the film he forces a sapling, straight and free, to the ground with his body to make whips to cleanse himself in the sauna, like a flagellant, before he goes to slaughter the murderers. The conflict between his bereavement and his faith torments him, but he declares that he knows no other way to live but by faith. (He overlooks the alternative of paganism represented by Ingeri, who prays to Odin and to the raven, Odin's bird, in the smoke escaping through the vent.) For the Master there is no release except in the miraculous gushing forth of the spring, like the path that opens before Jof and Mia as they walk away from death and apocalypse at the end of *The Seventh Seal*. But *The Virgin Spring* offers no serious alternative to faith – no lapsed priest like Raval, no unbelieving cynic like Jöns, no tormented believer to compare with Antonius Block.

In *The Seventh Seal* the knight becomes a Faust-figure when he confesses that faith is not enough, that he requires knowledge of God; again, he asks the witch to tell him about the Devil, reasoning that surely the Devil must know God. Therefore Jöns resembles the diabolical squire Mephistopheles, particularly when he challenges Block's faith as, horrified, the two men watch the witch burn:[23]

> JÖNS: What does she see? Can you tell me?
> KNIGHT *shakes his head*: She feels no more pain.
> JÖNS: You don't answer my question. Who watches over that child? Is it the angels, or God, or the Devil, or only the emptiness? Emptiness, my lord!
> KNIGHT: This cannot be.
> JÖNS: Look at her eyes, my lord. Her poor brain has just made a discovery. Emptiness under the moon. (69)

Or, to suggest another similarity, Jöns with his store of comical folk wisdom – 'No matter which way you turn', he observes, 'you have your rump behind you' (30) – is a Sancho Panza before his time,

[23] The resemblance to Faust has been noted by Eric Rohmer, 'With *The Seventh Seal* Bergman Offers Us His Faust', in *Focus on the Seventh Seal*, pp. 134–35. Bergman directed *Faust* at the Malmö City Theatre in 1958 (Steene, *Ingmar Bergman: A Guide*, p. 309); it was rather *Urfaust* according to Cowie, 'Ingmar Bergman: A Chronology', 296.

riding with a Quixote whose idealism is forever out of date.[24] Or again, Block the unbelieving crusader anticipates Unamuno's Saint Emmanuel the Good, the priest who is martyred by his loss of faith: in this view Block prays in the final scene as the leader of his flock, rather than for himself. In the first scene on the beach he attempted to pray for himself, but no words came.[25]

The film may be seen more fully as a response to Camus's *Plague*.[26] Antonius Block is like Camus's Doctor Rieux when he administers a painkiller to the girl doomed to burn as a witch; like Rieux, Block is bereft of belief in anything beyond elementary human solidarity; he does not even share Rieux's feeling for the beauty of nature – which is negated in the wild storm at night at the end of *The Seventh Seal*. The artist Jof corresponds to Camus's little clerk named Grand, perpetually polishing the first sentence of the novel he never writes any further. Bergman's monk corresponds to Camus's Jesuit priest, Father Paneloux, who delivers two memorable sermons, the first more severe (and more like the monk's in the film), the second more charitable. Paneloux begins the first sermon by stating his theme as directly as Bergman's monk, and in terms similar to his: 'Calamity has come on you, my brethren, and, my brethren, you deserved it' (86–87). Like Bergman and Hélinant, Paneloux personifies the Plague:

> See him there, that angel of the pestilence, comely as Lucifer, shining like Evil's very self! He is hovering above your roofs with his great spear in his right hand, poised to strike, while his left hand is stretched toward one or other of your houses. Maybe at this very moment his finger is pointing to your door, the red spear crashing on its panels, and even now the plague is entering your home and settling down in your bedroom to await your return. Patient and watchful, ineluctable as the order of the scheme of things, it bides its time. (88–89)

After the first sermon, Paneloux endures continuing suffering caused by the plague among his flock, in particular the death of an innocent

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[24] On *Don Quixote* and *The Seventh Seal* see Jerry H. Gill, *Ingmar Bergman and the Search for Meaning* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969), p. 19; Sarris, '*The Seventh Seal*', 83; Sonnenshein, 'The Problem of Evil', 139.

[25] M. de Unamuno, 'Saint Emmanuel the Good, Martyr', in *Abel Sanchez and Other Stories*, trans. by Anthony Kerrigan (Chicago: Regnery, 1956). The resemblance of Unamuno's Saint Emmanuel to Tomas, the doubting priest in Bergman's *Winter Light* (1961), has been discussed by Allen Lacy, 'The Unbelieving Priest: Unamuno's *Saint Emmanuel the Good, Martyr* and Bergman's *Winter Light*', *Literature Film Quarterly*, 10 (1982), 53–61.

[26] Albert Camus, *La peste* (Paris: Gallimard, 1947); *The Plague*, trans. by Stuart Gilbert (New York: Knopf, 1948).

child, which seems to shake his faith. In the second sermon he no longer addresses his listeners as 'you' but as 'we'. It is clear that he feels trapped by the conflict between evil and his faith in a good and loving God:

> In other manifestations of life God made things easy for us and, thus far, our religion had no merit. But in this respect He put us, so to speak, with our backs to the wall. Indeed, we were all up against the wall that plague had built around us, and in its lethal shadow we must work out our salvation. He, Father Paneloux, refused to have recourse to simple devices enabling him to scale that wall. (201)

His solution makes explicit the depth of his conflict, and Rieux, in the congregation, notices how dangerous it is to Paneloux's faith:

> 'My brothers, a time of testing has come for us all. We must believe everything or deny everything. And who among you, I ask, would dare to deny everything?'
>
> It crossed Rieux's mind that Father Paneloux was dallying with heresy in speaking thus, but he had no time to follow up the thought. (202)

Bergman's monk expresses his inner conflict in his frenzied emotional state.[27] In Hélinant's poem, the speaker's agony at the spectacle of ecclesiastical abuses drives him to rhetorical extremes which are similarly suggestive of heresy. By allowing the priest to speak (as Steinbeck allows Mrs. Sandry to speak), Camus anticipates Bergman's monk more closely than did either von Hofmannsthal or Strindberg.[28] In this comparison the film comes closer to depictions of the twentieth century than to depictions of the Middle Ages.

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[27] Comments such as the following fail to empathize with the vivid torment of Bergman's monk: 'A mad priest screams abuse at the ugliness of his audience [...]; glutted with hate, he joyfully proclaims the wrath of God' (Norman N. Holland, '*The Seventh Seal*: The Film as Iconography', *Hudson Review*, 12 (1959), 267); 'A fiery-eyed minister who shouts about doom and damnation and fills his listeners with fear of God, not love' (Bosley Crowther, '*The Seventh Seal*', in *Focus on the Seventh Seal*, pp. 77–78).

[28] On *The Seventh Seal* and Camus see Sonnenshein,'The Problem of Evil', 138–40. Bergman directed Camus's *Caligula* in 1946 (Steene, *Ingmar Bergman: A Guide*, p. 305; Cowie, 'Ingmar Bergman: A Chronology', 293).

5. History

I have mentioned a number of resemblances of the film to post-medieval works, but they could be multiplied further.[29] The very abundance of such available comparisons is central to my argument about the film, because I claim that the film speaks an idiom that could not have been imagined in the Middle Ages. Bergman's work resonates with post-medieval experience – we could add Beckett, Dinesen, Dostoevsky, Heidegger, Ibsen, Kafka, Kierkegaard, Lagerlöf, Melville, Nerval, Nietzsche, and Flannery O'Connor – and yet we have the uncanny resemblance of Bergman's monk to Hélinant, along with other medieval resonances with works Bergman may or may not have known. For example, Block may be seen as a Grail knight who accomplishes the one significant deed to which he aspires, when he enables Jof and his family to escape, even though, like Perceval, who failed to win the Grail, he fails to provide the doomed society of his other friends with miraculous sustenance. Jof, the juggler whose vision of the Virgin somehow prepares for his escape, is like the Tumbler of Our Lady, a minstrel in a medieval French tale who became a monk; ashamed because he was too ignorant to render any other service, he secretly performed his leaps and somersaults before the altar, and his service was miraculously accepted by the Virgin.[30] Medieval scholars may recognize in the film two pastourelles, versions of the medieval lyric genre which narrates an encounter of the speaker with a peasant girl: first an earthy version, when Skat and Lisa crawl into the bushes after their hasty courtship, and then an idealized one, when Block encounters Mia and her family on a sunny hillside near the end of day and accepts their offer of strawberries and milk.[31]

On the broader historical plane, Bergman has conflated three powerful motifs: crusade, plague, and witchcraft. In the film he has compacted them into a denser, more medieval moment than ever

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[29] 'Bergman himself has mentioned George[s] Bernanos' *The Diary of a Country Priest* as a source of inspiration': Birgitta Steene, *Ingmar Bergman* (New York: Twayne, 1968), p. 67. According to Cowie, Bernanos's novel inspired the scene of Jof's vision of the Virgin (*Ingmar Bergman: A Critical Biography*, p. 144).

[30] *Del Tumbeor Nostre Dame*, ed. by Erhard Lommatzsch (Berlin: Weidmann, 1920); trans. by Alice Kemp-Welch, *Of the Tumbler of Our Lady and Other Miracles* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1908).

[31] See *The Medieval Pastourelle*, ed. William D. Paden (New York: Garland, 1987). Block's interlude with Mia and her family is like an 'augmented pastourelle', since the cast is expanded to include first Mia's child, then her husband, then the knight's squire. For discussion of the scene in other connections, see Birgitta Steene, 'The Milk and Strawberry Sequence in *The Seventh Seal*', *Film Heritage*, 8.4 (1973), 10–18.

transpired. The crusades began with the first one in 1095–99 and continued through the seventh, that of Saint Louis, in 1270. Although the process was always more disorderly and continuous than the neat series of seven implies, since small groups set out sporadically to fight the Turks on their own, it appears that nothing like a crusade took place between about 1330 and 1359.[32] But the Black Death first appeared in Western Europe in 1347. It reached Denmark in 1348, spread to Norway in 1349 and struck Sweden in 1350.[33] In history as in the film, 'the Order of the Flagellants, who marched through the streets of European towns beating each other with chains and knotted whips, recruited many new members at this time [of plague].'[34] Meanwhile the concept of witchcraft was developing in ecclesiastical writings from around 1230 to 1430, but fear of witchcraft reached its height during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; before the fifteenth century there was 'no public for a witch scare.'[35] In Sweden persecution of witches raged for less than a decade, from 1668 to 1676. Although we have Swedish legal records showing that from the end of the Middle Ages onward the penalty for making a compact with the Devil was death, witches were usually executed by being beheaded and then burnt; a recent historian has found only one woman who was burnt alive, as in the film, during the seventeenth-century trials.[36] In

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[32] Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951–54), III, pp. 440–41. In *The Seventh Seal* it is not clear whether or not Antonius Block participated in a crusading army.

[33] Plague was reported in 1350 in three towns around Stockholm (Uppsala, Västerås, Strängnäs), to the south in Linköping and to the west at Skara, and at Visby on Gotland. There were recurrences in 1360, 1364, and 1421. Jean-Noël Biraben, *Les hommes et la peste en France et dans les pays européens et méditerranéens* (Paris: Mouton, 1975–76), I, p. 415.

[34] Joseph R. Strayer and Dana C. Munro, *The Middle Ages 395–1500*, 4th edn (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1959), p. 463. The flagellants were condemned by Pope Clement VI in 1349: see Richard Kieckhefer, 'Radical Tendencies in the Flagellant Movement of the Mid-Fourteenth Century', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 4 (1974), 157–76.

[35] *Witchcraft in Europe 1100–1700: A Documentary History*, ed. by Alan C. Kors and Edward Peters (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), p. 6. Development of the concept: *European Witchcraft*, ed. by William E. Monter (New York: Wiley, 1969), p. 3.

[36] Bengt Ankarloo, *Trolldomsprocesserna i Sverige* (Stockholm: Nordiska Bokhandeln, 1971), pp. 326 and 329–34. The folklore of medieval witch-burning found expression in the Swedish film *Witchcraft through the Ages* (*Haxan*), dir. Benjamin Christensen (Svensk Filmindustrie, 1922). Witch-burning in seventeenth-century Denmark was depicted in *Day of Wrath* (*Vredens Dag*), dir. Carl Dreyer, Palladium Film (Denmark), 1943.

the conjunction of crusade, plague, and witchcraft that he depicts, Bergman has given us a Middle Ages which combines elements characteristic of the eleventh through the seventeenth centuries. By compacting these elements he has heightened the sense of closure in the film, but by preserving an implicit twentieth-century perspective he has maintained the sense of release.[37]

6. Autobiography

In *The Magic Lantern* Bergman wrote of his relation with his father, a distinguished but tormented Lutheran minister. He told of a summer Sunday when his father took him, aged nearly eight, on his bicycle for a long ride to a country church where he was to preach (266–80). It is tempting to see Antonius Block in the film, determined to resolve his own faith and the leader of the flock of lost souls in the final sequence, as a figure of the minister. In this perspective the filmmaker resembles Jöns, who accompanied Block to the church where they saw the wall-painting, just as young Bergman accompanied his father. The skeptical, even Mephistophelean Jöns implies an unbelieving Bergman, and indeed, Bergman says he pretended not to believe in God on that Sunday in his childhood, until a stronger and more pious boy twisted his arm and made him say he did. In the preface to the screenplay of *The Seventh Seal* Bergman revealed his continuing ambivalence toward religion:

> Regardless of my own beliefs and my own doubts, which are unimportant in this connection, it is my opinion that art lost its basic creative drive the moment it was separated from worship. (8)

And again, developing a metaphor in which the medieval cathedral represents artistic creation:

> Regardless of whether I believe or not, whether I am a Christian or not, I would play my part in the collective building of the cathedral. (9)

In *The Magic Lantern* he revealed more overtly the limits of his faith:

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[37] Moderns sometimes attribute an ideal of closure to medieval culture; as Bergman depicts it, closure was not an ideal but an imminent threat. For an argument that medieval writers also appreciated 'suspension of closure', see Rosemarie P. McGerr, 'Medieval Concepts of Literary Closure: Theory and Practice', *Exemplaria*, 1 (1989), 149–79.

> I have struggled all my life with a tormented and joyless relationship with God. Faith and lack of faith, punishment, grace and rejection, all were real to me, all were imperative. (204)

On the other hand, in his role as filmmaker Bergman corresponds to Jof the artist, whom Block delivers from death by his one significant deed. On that same Sunday in the country, Bergman and his father crossed a river in a ferry. Bergman remembers how his father yanked him away from the gunwale where he was dangling his feet in the swift-flowing river. On the way home a storm blew up and became so violent that the boy was afraid the Last Judgment was at hand: 'I said I wasn't scared, but I thought: Perhaps this is the Last Judgment, when the angels blow on their trumpets [...]' (278). The storm passed, just as in the film the angel of death passes over Jof, Mia, and Mikael. The correspondence of Bergman to Jof is supported by Jof's relation with two women: the wife of Jof's benefactor Block is named Karin, like Bergman's mother, and Jof's wife Mia is played by the actress Bibi Andersson, with whom Bergman had entered a romantic relationship in 1955 and to whom he dedicated the script of the film.[38]

So Bergman corresponds to both the skeptical Jöns and the visionary Jof – and to Block as well, the central figure of spiritual torment in his film. As he said in an interview, 'It is [...] with a certain kind of desperation that I have experienced the Blocks in myself and the fact that I can never really free myself from them.'[39] The son, perpetually threatened by being blocked as a believer and as an artist, can never free himself from the image of the father.[40] Elsewhere he has said that his father 'liked *The Seventh Seal* a great deal.'[41]

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[38] Cowie, 'Ingmar Bergman: A Chronology', 295; Cowie, *Ingmar Bergman: A Critical Biography*, pp. 134–39.

[39] Steene, 'The Milk and Strawberry Sequence in *The Seventh Seal*', 17. As Cowie observes, 'To a singular degree, all Bergman's characters are related to one another. In the chaos of life, they are elements of the artist's psyche engaged in a kind of centrifugal dance away from their source' (*Ingmar Bergman: A Critical Biography*, p. 141).

[40] The Swedish noun *block* means 'block, boulder'; the verb *blockera* means 'to block, to blockade.' We first see Antonius Block on the seashore among boulders.

[41] Jean Béranger, 'Meeting with Ingmar Bergman: An Interview', in *Focus on the Seventh Seal*, p. 13.

7. Opening and Closure

It is the shifting, multiple perspectives of *The Seventh Seal* that make it broader than *The Virgin Spring*. The latter film revolves around the closed, avenging faith of the Master; the former, around the loving piety of Jof, set among the alternatives of the monk's fanaticism, Raval's cynicism, Jöns's humanity, and Block's agony. Jof really sees the Holy Virgin with her child, and the viewer knows he really sees her because the camera sees her as well. It is interesting that the screenplay (17) describes Jof's experience of the vision only in terms of its effect on his face, without suggesting that the camera might see it. In the film the one character who has seen God is saved, together with his wife and child. Jof is also capable of seeing Death. Others – Block of course, and the camera – can also see Death; Jöns does not see Death the first time he answers his knock on the door of the castle, but he seems to see him, as do the others, when Death enters the room. Mia, Jof's wife, sees neither the Virgin nor Death; she herself is a figure of the Virgin, a Mary to Jof's Joseph, with their little babe. The film is a remarkable recreation of the Middle Ages because, even as it expresses the severest doubts, it shows respect for medieval faith.

The film is closed by Revelation but released by the open road that Jof takes at the end with Mia and Mikael. It is closed by plague but released by survival. It is closed by authority but opened by humanity – Jof's simplicity of spirit and love of his family, Jöns's good fellowship, Block's sympathy for the witch. In his freedom as an artist, Bergman has reinvented the Middle Ages through a dark glass, but he has reinvented it with startling fidelity, as the juxtaposition of his monk with Hélinant de Froidmont demonstrates.

Bergman's relation with his subject bespeaks both the anxiety of paternal, artistic, and historical influence – the threat of closure of the poet's horizon – and the exuberance of largesse as the poet reinvents his subject even better than he knows. In a vital pulsation, closure becomes release at the end of the film, and release becomes closure in Bergman's recreation of Hélinant. To subvert the language of Harold Bloom, one might argue that priority is an initial advantage in poetic history but not a final one.[42] The child recreates the parent through perception, then through memory, and so we recreate the Middle Age by imposing upon it our perception, be it false or true. A strong maker may recreate his precursor by a true reading, as Bergman did in the figure of the monk. By recreating his precursor, his father, the artist recreates himself. Does not the scholar attempt to do the same?

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[42] *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973).

8. The Simulacrum

The culture of postmodernism has been characterized in the emblematic figure of the simulacrum, the copy of a copy. Scott Durham suggests that there exist two versions of the simulacrum, one negative and the other positive: the first emphasizes the absence of an original, the fact that the copy of a copy is distanced from the grounding or authority of any ultimate model, while the second emphasizes instead the presence of the creative impulse, the potential for metamorphosis.[43] Walter Benjamin offered photography and film as examples of art in which, in contrast to traditional art forms such as painting and sculpture, the copy of a copy functions in the absence of an original.[44] In postmodern culture, the simulacrum represents 'a culture unabashedly posthumous [...] with its cult of the "post" and the "neo", and its frank acknowledgement that its most fundamental truths persist only in recycled, re-enacted, or reconstructed form' (Durham, 87).

In *The Seventh Seal* the simulacrum, reconstructive memory, and the celluloid artifact function as copies seemingly independent of an original. They are embodied in Bergman's monk, who is a vivid copy of a faint original, if indeed Bergman knew the original in Hélinant de Froidmont at all. With the effacement of the original, the copy loses its subaltern status. So it is, in the unwinding of time, that 'each moment of history is incomplete, only the repetition and displacement of another' (Durham, 186). Bergman's monk is a simulacrum of Hélinant: as a copy in the negative sense he effaces his predecessor, but in the positive sense he expresses Bergman's creative or reconstructive power. He is a postmodern avatar of the medieval past.

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[43] *Phantom Communities: The Simulacrum and the Limits of Postmodernism*, typescript, forthcoming (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), pp. 19–24.

[44] 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1936), in *Illuminations*, trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1968), pp. 217–51.

THEORIZING MEDIEVALISM: THE CASE OF *GONE WITH THE WIND*

ROSEMARY WELSH

TWO SEEMINGLY UNRELATED INCIDENTS motivate this paper. The first one is the sporadic celebratory references to the fiftieth anniversary of *Gone with the Wind* as one of the greatest, and if not that, at least one of the most popular motion pictures ever made. The screenplay was taken, as we know, from a singular novel by Margaret Mitchell which won the Pulitzer prize in 1937. The novel was translated into numerous languages and by now has had an estimated readership of over 30 million people. The second incident was a curious conversation with a great-aunt concerning Irish or Celtic mythology. In response to my knowledge of one of the ancient legends of the people of the Sidhe, the Fairies that abound in medieval Celtic literature and legend, she said that I had a 'wonderful grasp of history'.

History becoming myth, and myth becoming history is the major emphasis to be analysed here. *Gone With the Wind,* the film, has become a veritable emblem of Atlanta. For example, Aunt Pittypat's Porch is the name of a popular Atlanta restaurant. The legendary Tara is recreated as a tourist attraction, battle scenes of the Civil War are reproduced for the tourist trade, and the Colony Square Hotel in Atlanta uses four screen stills from the movie as the graphics for their 'Welcome to Atlanta' brochure. These are just a few contemporary examples of this American mythology in the film parading as actual local history. The 'fact' that the Civil War took place has become conflated with the narrative of the novel transposed to the film. This creates an intertext of filmic plot, American history, and ancient Celtic mythology by virtue of the obvious references in both the novel and the film.

The most obvious and deliberate connection must be through the name 'Tara'. On the one hand, Tara is the legendary origin-site of the kings of ancient Ireland, the leaders of the heroes of medieval Irish literature, standing therefore at the centre of the myth and memory of the Irish people. It was to Tara that the sons of Finn went with their petition for land, a land that can only be claimed by being fought for. In the same way Tara stands metaphorically at the centre of *Gone with the Wind*, which as a whole seems to echo the myths and legends perceived or developed into history through the ages in Ireland – a

movement documented as early as 1909 by Evans-Wentz in his magisterial work on the medieval legends and myths of the Celts.[1] From this evident basis, one may argue for increasing correspondences between ancient Celtic myths and the verbal and visual metaphors of the modern film, the former becoming indeed the originating impulse for the structuring of the latter; while curiously, the metaphors of *Gone with the Wind* operate for their modern audience in much the same way as the ancient myths did for the Irish people, moving mythic memory into a text identified as temporal reality, as history.

The point is again made clearly by the opening scene of David O. Selznick's film, which informs us that we are witnessing a landscape of legend framed by a giant oak tree, symbol both of the Druids and the landowners of long ago. As the camera moves across the land, the narrative unfolding cinematically is matched by the narrative verbally depicted across the screen, superimposed on the ever-widening landscape. The spectator of the film is told:

> There was a land of cavaliers and cotton fields called the Old South. Here in this pretty world, Gallantry took its last bow. Here was the last ever to be seen of knights and their ladies fair, of Master and of slave. Look for it only in books, for it is no more than a dream remembered, a civilization Gone With the Wind.

The medieval referents are obvious: gallants, knights, fair ladies, slaves and masters, all indicate that we are in effect in a feudal realm, the kingless feudalism and the ante-bellum South. How far, one may wonder, do these deliberate evocations of mythical names and legendary landscapes affect the structuring of the central characters, and especially the female characters of the film? Its heroine is Katy Scarlett O'Hara, the beautiful and spirited young daughter of Ellen Robillard and Gerald O'Hara. There can be no doubt about the Irish origins of 'O'Hara', but what of the unusual name 'Scarlett', a name soon to be juxtaposed against Scarlett's counterpart, the pale and wanly delicate Melanie. One of the great legends of Ireland, repeated in annals and hagiography through the ages, is that of the meeting of the daughters of the kings of Ireland with St Patrick, and his explanation of Christianity to them,[2] a meeting responsible for the

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[1] This legend is reported in Walter Yeeling Evans-Wentz, *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries* (Rennes: Oberthur, 1909, repr. Oxford: University Books, 1966), p. 78.

[2] This legend is reported in all of the material researched on Celtic mythology and Irish legends of the Middle Ages. The citation used here is from John Sharkey, *Celtic Mysteries: The Ancient Religion* (New York: Crossroads, 1981), p. 21. The legend reads: 'Ethne, the Beautiful, and Fedelm, the Rosy Red, daughters of the King of the West, had come to wash in the Sacred Well which was their daily ritual. They found

conversion of the Irish to Christianity. One of these daughters bore a name which when translated from the Gaelic means 'Rose Red', or 'scarlet'. The other was the pale and gentle 'White Sister'. Is it possible to see Melanie and Scarlett as based, like the name Tara, on an origin-legend, this time the entry of Ireland into Western Christianity? Could one go on to suggest a further clustering of female characters to parallel the Irish triple goddess Maeve, later to become St Brigit, and to merge eventually with the image of the Virgin Mary? Maeve, the triple goddess, controlled knowledge, leechcrafts, agriculture and inspiration, all in the province of women in ancient Ireland,[3] and areas which seem to be represented in the film by Mammy, Ellen, and Scarlett herself. It is to Ellen's cool hand and Mammy's breast that Scarlett's imagination returns for solace throughout both the novel and the film. But it is to the earth, to the dirt itself that she goes, embracing it in the famous scene where Scarlett raises her hand against the poverty, exhaustion and disasters of the war, swearing that never will she or hers go hungry again. Meanwhile Melanie can be seen as an analogue of the poetess Eodain of the Tuatha de Danaan race, who chanted the song of victory when her people conquered the Firbolgs on the plains of Moyture, and through whose efforts Eugene the king of Munster gained victory over his foes;[4] for though Melanie does not bring victory, she is the film's most poetic speaker, and sacrifices even her wedding ring to help the cause, the cause Scarlett takes no interest in. One could also note that the people of the earth, the Sidhe or Tuatha de Danaan, are familiarly known in Ireland to this day as 'the gentry';[5] and there is no doubt that Melanie represents the gentry in all reality.

This equation of ancient Irish myth and modern American movie-making has of course, and in spite of the straightforward name-

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Patrick already there. He and his company of twelve in white robes (the traditional priesthood) with their books before them (the new knowledge) were now the guardians of the ancient Sacred place. The goddesses of Ireland, sleeping in death, were invoked and then wedded to Christ, his son, our husband.'

[3] For this and other references to the ancient Celtic goddesses, see Barbara Walker, *The Woman's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets* (New York and San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1983), p. 684.

[4] Lady Wilde (Francesca Speranza Wilde), *Ancient Legends, Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland* (Boston: Ticknor and Co., 1887), I, pp. 179, 230.

[5] The appellation occurs throughout the reports given verbally by the Irish peasantry in the first decades of the twentieth century. The people of the Sidhe and their own country Tir-nan-Og (The Country of the Young) were part of the lore right down to the present time. These legends were culled and written by Lady Gregory, *Visions and Beliefs in the West of Ireland Collected and Arranged by Lady Gregory with Two Essays and Notes by W. B. Yeats* (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1920).

connections, not seemed of much interest to scholarship, which as regards Margaret Mitchell's novel has tended to centre on the overturning of the identity of the Southern lady, through Scarlett's energetic pursuit of male occupations.

There is no lack of agreement on the importance of role reversals, on the ultimate tragedy of the novel and the film in the strictures caused by gender roles acted out within the framework of the ultimate theme of survival, who will and who will not emerge unscathed from the devastation of the social upheaval of war. If, however, we return again to the various goddess motifs visible in the film and in the novel, a different interpretation might be placed on Scarlett's lack of ladylike behaviour. In the ancient legends recorded in the Celtic Middle Ages, all of the trouble began when Toice Bhrean, the lazy wench who was to be guarding the sacred well, the openings into the earth goddess, neglected her duties. Owing to her neglect, Lough Gur issued, flooding the goddess. It was Leban, the daughter of Eochaidh Finn that then guarded Lough Neagh so that the lake appeared as dry land to anyone fortunate enough to behold it and the tree growing out of it, a tree covered with a green cloth under which sat a woman knitting.[6] This daughter of Tara was appointed to save the Earth. It is for this reason, I believe, that constantly see Scarlett in the film clothed in green. The green was the colour of the great goddess Tara, the colour of the Earth. It is the colour Scarlett O'Hara wears at the Twelve Oaks picnic, the colour she wears when she returns to Tara during the war; and after the war, the colour of the draperies out of which she makes the garment she wears when she visits Rhett Butler is green. The purpose of her visit to Rhett, of course, was to raise money to save Tara.

In a fifteenth-century manuscript *Agallamh na Senorach* (a Colloquy with the Ancients by St. Patrick) copied from medieval manuscripts and translated by Standish O'Grady, we read of Ruidhe, Fiacha and Eochaid, the three sons of the King of Ireland. Leaving their nurses and guardians, they went to Fert Na Ndruadh or the grave of the wizards, northwest of Tara, to ask of their father a country, a domain; but he refused their request. They then formed a project to gain lands and riches from the Tuatha de Danaan at the brugh upon the Boyne. After being told by their father, 'Lands I will not bestow on you, but win lands for yourself', the three sons were greeted by Daghda's son, Bodhb Derg and given wine. Here too, they met the three daughters of Midhir, and from these daughters derived all their wishes. The sons fought and won territories and wealth in the greatest abundance; and they then repaired to the dun where they lived for

[6] Evans-Wentz, p. 78.

three times fifty years. After this time they returned again to the Tuatha de Danaan.[7]

In similar fashion, but with vastly different results, we see the 'Sons of the South' preparing for war, fighting for a land that too will live only in legend. In the scene of war-fever, when the pale Ashley declares that gentlemen always fight better than rabble, as if this was a guarantee of success in the war brewing with the North, Rhett Butler cautions that 'It is hard winning a war with words'. He notes that 'the North has industries, the South has cotton, slaves and arrogance'.

This scene of clamouring for war as a 'point of honour' in order to maintain the purity of a state of natural grace, in opposition to the bondage of industrialization in the North, follows the Rousseauean structure of the opposition between nature and culture. Yet, this very innocence unclouded by history, this clamouring for the idyllic 'Once Upon a Time' acted out on the model of the medieval Celtic chronicles, is ultimately possible only by planned violence, the rules and devices of passions overlaid with the destruction of the nature desired as a goal. The violence in the idyllic social system praised in order to be protected is laid bare.

This violence has been identified as sexual by Kathleen Diffley, in which she identifies a long tradition in which the South is an unwilling bride, illustrated by the scene in which Rhett overcomes Scarlett sexually after carrying her dramatically up the stairs.[8] The assumption in this interpretation is that the union of North and South after the war is an uneasy sexual coming together. This identification of the South with feminine characteristics is a commonplace in literary scholarship.

As for the question of why the Irish were in the South, the response is somewhat more complex. Many of the people who were the actual planters of the inlands of Georgia were of yeoman stock, and according to Darden Asbury Pyron, stand for the future, progress and innovation. The cavaliers and knights, descendants of the English aristocracy, lived in the coastal areas, and represent the past, tradition, culture, civilization, aristocracy, femininity and ultimately, death.[9] It is in this tradition of the feminine that we can place the meaning of Melanie's name: it means darkness, the black.

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[7] See Evans-Wentz, pp. 412-13, for this entire legend.

[8] Kathleen Diffley, 'The Roots of Tara, Making War Civil'.*American Quarterly*, 36.3 (1984), 372.

[9] Darden Asbury Pyron, 'Gone With the Wind and the Southern Cultural Awakening'.*The Virginia Quarterly Review*, 62.4 (1986), 576–80. The focus of Pyron's argument is that the Old South romance was a central target of the Young South in Margaret Mitchell's generation.

Analysis of the novel always seems to center on the question of 'art', and the general agreement is that it falls into the category of a pattern of sentimental romance, organizing a rhetoric of home and family, and thus is a woman's novel.[10] The new heroine, Scarlett, as the New Woman is central to this argument.[11] Pyron, discussing Mitchell's place in the Southern literary tradition, places her in the generation of the Young South, along with Faulkner, O'Connor and others, attempting to uncover and demystify the 'magnolia and julips' of the legendary plantation. The verities of the Old South romance are central as a target for the Young South writers.

According to this analysis, what Mitchell did was to identify the Irish as a tribe in which egalitarianism and democracy dominate. It was, after all, the daughter of the union of the old Robillard money and an enterprising yeoman farmer, Gerald O'Hara, that survived the catastrophe of the war. It was not the aristocracy of the imaginary antebellum Southerners, seen as the last Europeans among whom elements of an earlier European tradition had survived into antebellum Southern culture, who survived the Civil War in the South of Mitchell's novel and Selznick's film, but the peasant yeoman who, in the words of James Joyce, 'possessed a purity that would redeem a corrupt, English speaking world'. In addition to the actual presence of Irish settlers in inland Georgia, as one of the historical facts upon which Mitchell might have written her novel, there is also the belief articulated most convincing by Ralph Luker that to be Southern and to be Catholic, as were the O'Haras in *Gone with the Wind,* is to function with the vision of the Other, the Outsider, in understanding the assumed realities in which the culture is immersed.[12]

Hopefully, these few examples demonstrate that there is a correspondence between Celtic mythology, the annals of the ancient Irish and the narratives of *Gone With the Wind.* The question might be WHY? Why these particular correspondences at that point in history, in 1939, and in the resurgence of interest in the novel, and the film at this point, now. What does the Once Upon a Time aspect of medieval Irish

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[10] Diffley, p. 372.

[11] This approach is dominant in Helen Deiss Irvin's essay, 'Gea in Georgia', *Recasting: Gone with the Wind in American Culture,* ed. by Darden Asbury Pyron, (Miami: Miami University Presses of Florida, 1983), p. 57. Irvin identifies Scarlett as a new type of heroine in rebellion against traditional society. The difficulty is, for Irvin, that women are prohibited from heroic status by society, and men are prohibited from heroic status because they are dependent upon women in Mitchell's novel.

[12] This position is stressed by Ralph E. Luker in 'To Be Southern/To be Catholic: An Intention of the Thought of Five American Writers', *Southern Studies,* 22.2 (1983), 174. Luker is discussing American Catholic Southern Writers, but the point in general is applicable to characters in Mitchell's novel as well.

legends have to do with the unfolding of cinematic time in *Gone with the Wind*?

My contention is that in this instance, as perhaps in others, medievalism becomes a discourse working as a synchronic irruption of the diachronic, evolutionary determinism that constitutes history. In the case of the film under discussion, history has become myth, myth has become history, but both operate on the order of narrative. And, as this discussion moves now from a descriptive to an analytic mode of address, a brief look at some current theorizing on film narrative might be helpful.

Contemporary discussion of film theory proposes an order based on narrative, rather than the older model posited by scholars such as Andre Bazin, who saw film as an art of reality.[13] According to David Bordwell, classical American films consist of temporal processes of information and action.[14] The Hollywood screenplay-writing manuals have long insisted on a formula plot which consists of an undisturbed stage, the disturbance, the struggle, and the elimination of the disturbance.[15] This order follows the American ideological position ingrained in our imaginations since the earliest colonial divines began to preach the doctrine of Manifest Destiny, or argue for the apocalyptic-millennial model in order to rationalise the Revolutionary War.

We can look at the film *Gone With the Wind* in terms of how it intersects American ideology, how the movies become a representation of social and cultural formulations which provide for thinking about or experiencing the world. The film becomes a totalizing discourse. I would further argue that, rather than discourses evolving one into the other, or one gradually fading away before the other, there is a return to an illusory origin as a mechanism by which a developing discourse becomes a dominant one. If we look at the film as one of the modes by which fictions bind us to representations of both the world and self, we can see film as a production of a text that, in the words of Walter Benjamin, 'extends our comprehension of the necessities which rule our lives while it manages to assure us of an immense and unexpected field of action'.[16] The film both produces a text and provides a master narrative by which we unify and systematise aspects of our cultural

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[13] See for example, *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology: A Film Theory Reader*, ed. by Phillip Rosen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

[14] Rosen, p. 17.

[15] Stephen Heath, 'Film and System: Terms of Analysis',*Screen*, 16.1 (1975), 48–50.

[16] quoted in Colin Mac Cabe, *Tracking the Signifier, Theoretic Essays: Film, Linguistics, Literature*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), p. 144.

condition. And in classical film, the narrative events unfold in a causal, chronological sequence.

As we enter the story of the Civil War in *Gone with the Wind*, we move between two polarities of structure, the immediacy and intimacy of the close up shots and the long, panoramic view of the cosmological eye view, or what has been called the God's eye view. In a sense of viewing this as a sign of the times, in a semiotic mode, it is the warfare, the scenes of carnage and desolation, that is validated by the eye view of the Divinity, not the intimacy of the domestic scenes. The filmic production of a text actually abolishes a signified so that the signifier is placed in direct relation to the referent which seems to escape all questions of meaning. The referent is the Civil War in *Gone with the Wind,* which has another referent to the Celtic medieval legends. The viewer is drawn into this myth, and placed in the position from which he or she has an already ordained position of knowledge. What we see then, is not a description of the past, but the ability to seek a reality in the significant repetitions of the narrative unfolding, the sense of history or time as a continuous narrative across the screen. But, we already know how the story will come out, since in this narrative history is a story always told, a repetition of the apocalyptic model of the American experience, the model of the apocalyptic battle to be followed by the millennial peace, a model which promised us, in the American dream, a re-enactment of the Biblical Exodus. Narrative produces the illusion of a mystery which it then resolves. And the resolution of the narrative lies in its iterancy, its ability to play over and again, like the film representing the narrative of the war. If we return to a famous statement about the American continent, spoken by Thomas Jefferson and gleaned from his writings, we can read:

> Let a philosophical observer commence a journey from the savages of the Rocky mountains eastwardly toward our seacoast. These he would observe in the earliest stage of association living under no law but that of nature [subsisting] and covering themselves with the flesh and skins of wild beasts. He would next find those on our frontiers in the pastoral state, raising domestic animals, to supply the defects of hunting. Then succeed our own semi-barbarous citizens, the pioneers of the advance of civilization, and so in his progress he would meet the gradual shades of improving man until he would reach his, as yet, most improved state in our seaport towns. This, in fact, is equivalent to a survey, in time, of the progress of man from the infancy of creation to the present day.[17]

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[17] Thomas Jefferson, *Writings,* ed. by H. A. Washington, VII, 378 (Monticello, September 6, 1824) quoted in Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), pp. 218–19.

In Jefferson's words, the whole of history and creation is laid out on the American land, visibly and concretely. History is read as a narrative, a book imposed on the land. Medieval is the middle point, and since we can, in Jefferson's image, as well as in the start, stop and re-wind aspect of film, enter into the narrative of history in the middle we can see the unfolding of cinematic time dematerializing the substance of the reality it consumes as an origin. In the same way, medievalism intersects and interrupts the flow of history. It introduced the note of eternal, unending time into the flow of real time in order to escape the end of that time by a return to the middle of an imaginary origin. The very fantasy of the interaction becomes the condition of possibility of this dematerialization, this making of concrete reality a ghost, or spirit. The goal of all movement in time is the end of time on the screen and in the end of real time. The ultimate desire is to escape this inevitability. What is promised in the film and in the strategy of medievalism is the dream of immortality in its own impossibility.

But remember, film posits the viewer in the position of knowledge, of how the story will end, how it 'comes out'. For the 1930s, *Gone With the Wind* allowed the possibility of a promise, of a way out of the eroding of confidence in the American dream through the same 'Begin Again' return to Celtic mythology, outside of the imaginary historical time line from Britain to the unpromising now. It also reiterated the necessity of fighting for the land, in order to realise the ancient millennial promise, a very real problem as Hitler was marching through Europe in 1939. The social conditions of pacifism in the United States necessitated this discourse of war, with the promise of victory acknowledged and understood. For today, the strategy of medievalism allows for the movement to an alternate temporal mode, the position outside the flow which binds us to the tide and time or time and tide of inevitability. The earth, the Tara, the ancient mother is in danger, and unlike Scarlett, we cannot think about that tomorrow. Medievalism, in all of these instances, acts to install another discourse, an unconscious strategy of subversion against the dominant discourse of power.

WELLS COLLEGE

GNOSTICISM, THE MIDDLE AGES, AND THE SEARCH FOR RESPONSIBILITY: IMMORTALS IN POPULAR FICTION

GWENDOLYN MORGAN[1]

CREATURES OF ETERNITY WALK among us – directing our destinies, forming our way of life, fighting each other for the collective human soul. Or so contemporary popular fiction would have us believe. Such immortals abound in the novels of authors like Anne Rice, Michael Romkey, and Suzy McKee Charnas;[2] in movies such as the Highlander trilogy; and in the television series based on these and other long-running favorites such as *Forever Knight* and *Friday the Thirteenth*. For medievalists, one significant characteristic of these beings is that the majority of them were 'born' in the Middle Ages and, even when they were not, embody many medieval traditions and beliefs. More importantly, all such tales involve the assumption that these powerful beings create our greatest art, pioneer our greatest medical and social advances, articulate our greatest scientific discoveries. On the negative side, they perpetrate the greatest oppressions and wholesale slaughters of humanity and engineer economic disasters. In other words, they are God and the Devil, playing a monumental Morality, allowing us to blame immortals for our evil and credit them with our good and thereby avoid any responsibility for either.

A sampling of popular fiction bears this out. Consider *Forever Knight*. In this now almost cult television series, a twelfth-century crusader-become-vampire has developed a serious dose of guilty conscience and longs once again to be mortal. Not satisfied with simply eschewing human blood, he works as a Toronto police officer to 'repay society for his sins' by protecting people against the darkness in themselves and against the greater dangers of less friendly vampires. Similarly, the immortals of the *Highlander* movies and TV series divide themselves into two camps: those who value, protect, and guide humans opposing those who would manipulate, exploit, and destroy them. Their contest is one for ultimate control of the earth. Although in the later television episodes, immortals may originate

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[1] An early version of this argument was presented at the 1996 General Conference on Medievalism at Kalamazoo.

[2] For the novels of Rice and Romkey, see notes 3, 4, and 5 below. Charnas's major 'immortals' fiction is *The Vampire Tapestry* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1980).

from any time period, the protagonists of both film and TV versions are medieval Scots, and each contest with their evil counterparts evinces itself as a form of medieval joust, a one-on-one battle with swords in which the victor beheads his opponent. In the series *Friday the Thirteenth*, the theme reverts to its most basic form of the struggle between the Christian God and Satan and their various spirit subordinates. No human-like immortal exists except for the evil twentieth-century spirit of Louis Vendredi. Nonetheless, the motifs all recall the Middle Ages: the Gothic vault in which recovered objects are kept, the idea of magical cursed (or blessed) objects itself, the various medieval rituals, demonic and otherwise, and the presence of covens of both black and white witches.

Turning to the novel, we find the same pattern evident. In Anne Rice's trilogy of the Mayfair witches,[3] the all-powerful family who (among other things) run great medical laboratories and social organizations, originated in medieval Scotland with Suzanne, who first called to her the spirit of the Taltos Lasher. The settings for this saga, too, are gothic – the French Quarter of New Orleans and ancient English and Scottish villages – and Lasher himself is a form of incubus, seeking to impregnate a Mayfair witch in order to breed a mate for himself. Indeed, the struggle for control of humanity is epitomized in the Taltos. Lasher, the evil side, controls, murders, and manipulates for self-interest, while Ashler runs philanthropic organizations and companies specializing in urban renewal, medical advances, and affordable toys and luxuries, all for the benefit of the human race and of which he himself has no need. Similarly, Rice's Vampire Chronicles offer us the same good-evil division among the immortals with the aim of protecting or exploiting the human race.[4] In this series, the opposition culminates in the contest between Maharet, with her ideal of the 'great family tree' of humanity and the good vampires' guardianship of it, and Akasha, the evil 'queen of the damned' who wishes to establish vampires as bloodthirsty, anthropomorphic deities. Likewise, Michael Romkey's vampires associate themselves with either Leonardo da Vinci or Caesar and Lucretia Borgia (all vampires) in their aspirations to guide and enhance or control and destroy human society.[5] The 'good' vampires

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[3] The trilogy consists of *The Witching Hour*, *Lasher*, and *Taltos* (New York: Knopf, respectively 1990, 1993, 1994).

[4] This series consists of *Interview with A Vampire*, *The Vampire Lestat*, *Queen of the Damned*, *Tale of the Body Thief*, and *Memnoch the Devil* (New York: Knopf, respectively 1976, 1985, 1988, 1992, 1995).

[5] See Romkey, *I, Vampire* and *The Vampire Chronicles* (New York: Ballantine, 1990, 1994).

contribute as exemplary statesmen (e.g., Thomas Jefferson), scientists (Leonardo), artists (Mozart), and so forth. The evil (the Borgias, Hitler, etc.) engineer prejudice, mass slaughter, and economic disaster. Even the resurgence of Arthurian novels centering on the concept of a 'once and future king' who will again save England in her time of greatest need and on the struggle between good (Merlin) and evil (Morgan/Morgause and Mordred) has associations with this breed of fiction.

The first and obvious question we might ask with regard to this proliferation of 'immortals' fiction is, 'Why the Middle Ages? Why do we continually turn to this period to seek explanation and atonement?' Much work has already been done in this area, most of it founded upon Umberto Eco's psychoanalytically-based theory[6] that we are returning not only to a golden past (which Norman Cantor has already proved we ourselves invented[7]), but also to our origins in order to understand and solve contemporary dilemmas:

> [...] all the problems of the Western world emerged in the Middle Ages: modern languages, merchant cities, capitalistic economy [...] the national state [...] the struggle between the poor and the rich, the concept of heresy or ideological deviation, even our contemporary notion of love [...] the conflict between church and state, trade unions [...] the technological transformation of labor [...]. *Thus, looking at the Middle Ages means looking at our infancy.* (op. cit., pp. 64–65, my emphasis)

Certainly, contemporary tales of immortals are part of our 'dreaming the Middle Ages', but they are also a continuation of medievalism as that process in mass culture which John Simons sees operating in popular literature of the late sixteenth through early nineteenth centuries;[8] though very different from the revivals/updatings of English moralities investigated by David Mills,[9] they are, in one sense, updated morality plays. Viewed as morality play, 'immortals' fiction represents a re-imagining of the struggle between good and evil as a debasement of contemporary gnosticism and an avoidance of moral responsibility, both flourishing within the current Millennial fever. In considering them, I am offering answers to two questions

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[6] Expressed in his 'The Return of the Middle Ages' in Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality*, trans. by William Weaver (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1986).

[7] See Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages* (New York: Morrow, 1991).

[8] See Simons, 'Medievalism as Cultural Process in Pre-Industrial Popular Literature', *Studies in Medievalism*, 7 (1995), 5–21.

[9] Mills, 'Replaying the Medieval Past: Revivals of Chester's Mystery Plays', *Studies in Medievalism*, 7 (1995), 181–93.

raised by Michael Hall:[10] 'Why does a late twentieth-century Passion play focus on our questions and doubts? Why were these doubts not a central question in the medieval drama?'

The overall structure of 'immortals' fiction is simple: the immortals in question, be they vampires, taltos, spirits, witches, or the like of 'highlander' Duncan McCloud, are divided into the two camps of the good guys and the bad guys. What most obviously distinguishes them is their treatment of humanity. Are men and women beings, albeit often inferior ones, whose existence is valuable and should be treated with respect? Should they be helped and encouraged to grow? Or are they a much lower order of animal, to be used as slaves, cannon fodder, prey, entertainment? In other words, is the human soul to be saved or destroyed? This, of course, is precisely the drama of the morality play – can Everyman present a good accounting? Will Mankind be safe in a Castle of Perseverance? Who will win their souls, God or Satan? The helplessness of human beings in the larger context of the struggle between immortals might also recall medieval moralities, if we see Mankind and Everyman as mere puppets on strings jerked this way and that by the various vices and virtues: morality representations of the human race appear to have no true power of choice in saving themselves; rather, they are threatened or guided, tempted or reassured, and the struggle lies in the respective strengths of the heavenly or demonic abstractions who fight to claim their souls. Human responsibility is thereby *seemingly* reduced to almost nothing. Similarly, in modern fiction, since the great geniuses of the past and present, be they good or evil, are by and large one species or another of immortal masquerading as human, since the survival or enslavement or annihilation of humanity depends not upon what *we* do but upon who among the polarized camps of immortals ultimately wins, our fate is not our problem. Instead, we can buy into a multitude of excuses: 'What's the use in trying? Anything I do doesn't matter anyway.' 'One vote doesn't make a difference.' 'It's not my fault.' 'What will be, will be.' 'It's in God's (or the Devil's) hands.' And *voilà*: the morality play recreated.

However, despite these apparent similarities, there is indeed a great difference between the medieval morality play and the modern, and it is twofold. First, medieval allegory was recognized as just that – allegory. As Eva Kimminich has explored at length in her essay, 'The

[10] In his essay '*Jesus Christ, Superstar* and Medieval Drama: Anachronism and Humor', in *Approaches to Teaching Medieval Drama*, ed. by Richard K. Emmerson (New York: Modern Language Association, 1990), 111–15 (p. 113).

Way of Vice and Virtue: A Medieval Psychology',[11] the apparent helplessness of morality play representations in the cosmic spiritual struggle is deceptive, for the good and bad angels, the virtues and vices, are themselves externalizations of individual conscience and desire and served to call man to task for his spiritual health rather than absolve him:

> [...] medieval iconography and psychology can be drawn upon to sketch not only the way in which the person was made responsible for his misbehavior or sins but also the manner in which he was forced to realize that his own weaknesses were his enemies. Furthermore, he was shown how to recognize his failures – failures which are commonly denied through various mental processes of rationalization [...]. The symbols and metaphors which surrounded the person in the Middle Ages and early Renaissance hence actually stimulated a critical look at the self and at the coherence of the Christian conception of the world. (op. cit., pp. 83–84)

Responsibility thus did, in fact, rest heavily on the individual to make the right choices. Like Faustus in Marlowe's Renaissance version, people were aware of the dualism in Christian teachings and that they had to submit to God's judgement and pray for divine Grace, eschewing the seductive evils of this world, to obtain salvation. Indeed, the great error and *hubris* of Faustus (and the Renaissance) was in taking *too much* responsibility, to the point of failing to realize that some of it had already been taken on by God in the form of Christ. In contrast, humans living in the fictional world of contemporary immortals are ignorant of the struggle for control of their destiny even as it rages all around them. These humans are basically OK, sometimes even 'good,' although occasionally 'driven' to bad acts through deception, or desperation, or insanity, or a bad upbringing, or genetic predisposition. And notice that even such assertions embody this same bias, evident in modern law and psychology, which ultimately alleviates direct responsibility for an individual's actions. Thus, the truly 'bad' things are not really results of deliberate human action. In the genre under consideration, they are instead laid at the door of vampires, witches, and highlanders. The holocaust and other mass annihilations. Plagues. Economic disasters. Manipulation of hapless humans by evil forces. All these are the work of immortals, and this fact relieves us of having to worry about what *we*, as individuals, should do to improve the present or future states of our society.

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[11] In *Iconographic and Comparative Studies in Medieval Drama*, ed. by Clifford Davidson and John H. Stroupe (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992), 158–86.

Although a fascination with the Middle Ages has been with us in popular culture since their close, the tenor of 'immortals' fiction is different from other types of neo-medievalism. The difference, I have suggested, centres on the issue of (non)responsibility. No longer do we wish to be heroes, knights of the Round Table or Merlins – we wish to be taken care of, to be absolved of moral judgement. Whence this about-face? If we consider when the great outpouring of 'immortals' fiction began, we also find a revival in popular concern with the Millennium and, with it, some sort of end to the world. Apocalyptic visions are, of course, nothing new. They originate, according to Norman Cohn,[12] with Zoroaster circa 1500 B.C. and reoccur with regularity throughout the Common Era of Western history. Notably, for our culture as a whole, the greatest of these appeared in the high Middle Ages; for America, in particular, the nineteenth century was awash with apocalyptic panics and movements. And with the approach of the twenty-first century, we cannot be surprised that another major outbreak of Millennial fever has arrived: according to recent polls, some 10 million Americans admit to being pre-millennialists.[13]

In the study just cited, Harold Bloom examines current popular religious and quasi-religious trends, focussing in particular on the phenomena of angels and angel-worship, prophetic visions and dreams, near-death experiences, psychic regressions and journeys, and 'not-dying', or intimations of an immortal or resurrection body. These he sees as responses to 'American millennial hysteria' and 'mass versions of an adulterated or travestied Gnosticism' (p. 32). Bloom's argument, in a nutshell, is that Gnosticism, the sense that acquaintance with a God too remote to know directly is best sought in the spark of residual divinity within the self, is a common response to millennial expectations when mainstream religions have weakened or been abandoned. This is particularly true in America, a nation historically prone to both gnosticism and apocalyptic visions, given the non-fulfillment of nineteenth-century religious expectations:

> Prophetic religion becomes apocalyptic when prophecy fails, and apocalyptic religion becomes Gnosticism when apocalypse fails [...] Gnosticism does not fail; it cannot fail, because its God is at once deep within the self and also estranged, infinitely far off, beyond our cosmos. (p. 30)

Gnostics therefore seek to return to the original human form:

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[12] See Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (Fairlawn, NJ: Essential Books, 1957).

[13] See Harold Bloom, *Omens of Millennium* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1996), p. 219

> a primordial person, at once male and female, earlier than Adam and Eve, unfallen and quasi-divine, angelic and yet higher than the angels, a nostalgic dream yet also a prophecy of millennial or messianic splendor, blazing in fiery light. That image has many names; the best generic one I know is Anthropos, or Man, (again meaning female just as much as male). (p. 9)

However, at the popular level, gnosticism becomes debased, not being approached with the severe intellectual and spiritual self-discipline of informed adherents. Thus, the divine in the self and the Anthropos become instead externalized into angels and guardian spirits, the 'Light' seen at the end of the tunnel in near-death experiences, the other selves seen in New Age psychic journeys, and so forth. Says Bloom, such phenomena are 'parodies' because 'they have no sense of innate divinity, no conviction that a magical self [...] is returning to its proper realm' (p. 144). Rather, they look to an Other to grant immortality rather than resurrection and a continuation of this world rather than a return to Eden or the advent of a new, divine world.

That 'immortals' fiction is the equivalent response of popular art and literature to contemporary millennial expectations seems clear. First, the sense of a looming apocalypse brings with it anxiety over our moral health and hence the stimulus underlying the morality play. This is true even for professed agnostics and atheists, for not only is there no such thing as an atheist in a foxhole, but most of us were raised with some sort of religious education, regardless of whether or not we have chosen to dismiss it. So, we find ourselves as Everyman, account book in hand, secretly afraid that we, too, are unready to face judgement. But not to fear! Since immortal forces control the course of human history, since we have abdicated responsibility for the conditions of our society, we have no power over those accountings. We do not have to act because, ultimately, we cannot act with any hope of effectiveness. Instead, we may be lucky or unlucky, favored or victimized by any particular breed of immortal; we may be saved or condemned. Thus we are freed of spiritual considerations in this near-atheistic age, for as Karen Armstrong puts it, we have countered God's death or desertion and 'fill[ed] the vacuum by creating new substitutes for God'.[14] Consider again the Highlander creed: 'There can be only One' – that One will determine humanity's fate. Hopefully, it will be the right One, and we will make it through. Consider, too, the close of *Memnoch the Devil*, the last book in Rice's Vampire Chronicles, where the 'good' vampires immolate themselves in the sunrise, believing the discovery of the veil of Veronica to be proof of the battle between God

[14] Armstrong, *A History of God* (New York: Knopf, 1993), p. 399.

and Satan-Memnoch (in which, Lestat has told us, human beings are powerless) and their self-sacrifice the route to their own salvation. The human crowd looks on and cheers, seeing in the vampires' destruction a replay of Christ's sacrifice and a new scapegoat for human error. A vampire, Lestat, found the veil. Many vampires atone for the world's sins. Thus, we do not have to. Similarly, the taltos and Romkey's vampires will save humanity through *their* respective sacrifices and issue in a new era of peace and plenty, a new Eden, the new Jerusalem. It is this combined sense of salvation and lack of responsibility which characterizes 'immortals' fiction, and also separates it from other forms of fantasy and horror.

It here seems appropriate to distinguish between the immortals of the fiction under examination – who are, in a sense, *human* monsters – and the terrible, non-human creatures dominating the genre which Roger Schlobin calls 'deep horror'.[15] Deep horror, says Schlobin, centres on the idea that 'existence is completely nihilistic and entropic', that 'all expectations of control are lost to chaos and anarchy', and that there is no future but only 'an oppressive present that never improves' (op. cit., pp, 26–7, 33). Human characters may be victims and scapegoats, as powerless as those in 'immortals' fiction, but for the inhabitants of deep horror, there is no benevolent force, no hope of a positive outcome; they are merely sheep being led to the slaughter. In short, there is no battle between good and evil waged with any hope of the good winning; humanity merely and necessarily succumbs to the endless and all-powerful evil of the monster. Ultimately, says Schlobin, deep horror is a means to allow the audience to experience their 'dark side' without culpability. 'Immortals' fiction, on the other hand, works toward the end, the final battle of the Highlander or the sacrifice of the vampire; it holds out for humanity an unearned but unequivocal hope – a form of Grace granted by the particular breed of immortal in the story. Thus, 'immortals' fiction attempts to assign elsewhere meaning and onus for the universal moral struggle; dark horror recognizes no struggle.

The second connection of 'immortals' fiction to our current apocalyptic obsession lies in the very idea of eternal life. As I have already mentioned, it is a commonplace that ours is an atheistic age in which we are witnessing the weakening of all major religions. How, then, do we satisfy our seemingly universal craving for eternal life? If we have rejected heaven, we are left with earth and some sort of metamorphosis that will render us forever young and functional, free of the threat of death by pestilence, famine, war, or simple old age. If

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[15] See Schlobin, 'Children of a Darker God', *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, 1.1 (1988), 25–50.

we are lucky, we, too, will 'die' to become an immortal Highlander, or be transformed by a good vampire, or mutate our genes to become a taltos. An eternity on earth, despite any foreseeable drawbacks, is at least something of which we can conceive. And in anthropomorphic form, we can still our insecurity and skepticism with the idea of a spiritual essence: we are seeking, in Bloom's words, not to be resurrected but to not die. Such a goal is more in concert with our empirical, scientific age, and as Maureen King has observed (with regard to Rice's vampire novels but in terms which apply, I think, equally well to 'immortals' fiction in general), it accounts for the 'dissolution of a firm and unambiguous distinction between good and evil effected [...] in part by the collapse of a ready distinction between human and other'.[16] Rice's vampire hero Lestat moreover repeatedly and overtly states what other immortals of contemporary fiction seem to imply in their obsessions with art, music, pure science, and other human accomplishments: namely, that this world, if we remove from it the threat of death, is just fine the way it is.[17]

Additional support for the idea of 'immortals' fiction as a pre-millennial, popular gnostic response and a search for absolution from moral responsibility is supplied by Judith Merkle Riley's *The Oracle Glass*, which on one level is a spoof on precisely this brand of popular expression.[18] Throughout this 500-page tale of France under the Sun King, various charlatans using a number of methods prey on the human obsession with knowing the immutable future. Conspicuous is the shared belief of the novel's characters that, since the future is pre-determined and cannot be changed, any and all action they may take is justified and meant to be. In other words, fortune-telling in this fiction (as is true also, according to Bloom, of fortune-telling in contemporary

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[16] King, 'Contemporary Women Writers and the "New Evil": the Vampires of Anne Rice and Suzy McKee Charnas', *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, 5.3 (1993), 75–84 (p. 77).

[17] Interestingly, this echoes the sentiments of the hero Aucassin in an anonymous twelfth-century French parody of medieval romance, who says: 'What would I do in heaven? I have no wish to enter there [...]. For to heaven go only such people as I'll tell you of: all those doddering old priests and the halt and the one-armed dotards who grovel all day and night in front of the altars [...] the folk garbed in rags and tatters and old, worn cloaks, who go barefoot and bare-buttocks and who die of hunger and thirst and cold and wretchedness [...]. Nay, I would go to hell; for to hell go the pretty clerks and the fine knights killed in tournaments and splendid wars [...] the lovely ladies, gently bred and mannered, those who have had two lovers or three besides their lords, and there go gold and silver and silk and sable, and harpers and minstrels and all the kings of this world'. See *Aucassin and Nicolette*, trans. by Pauline Matarasso (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), pp. 28–9.

[18] Riley, *The Oracle Glass* (New York: Viking, 1994).

practice), is another form of avoiding moral responsibility. The most sought-after seeress in the novel is a nineteen-year-old girl masquerading as a 150-year-old marquise preserved in eternal youth by medieval alchemy. As the immortal Marquise de Morville, Genevieve once again embodies, in the fictional context of seventeenth-century French society, the modern yearning for the golden Middle Ages and our need to adopt their currency to pay our own psychic debts. However, she does indeed have a gift for seeing images of the future in water. She is also a devotee of the classics, and her gods are Reason and Logic. This presents her with our modern, scientifically-inspired paradox: how does one reconcile the ability to see the future with a solid belief in rational intellectualism and human will? To Genevieve, the obsession of the French aristocracy with various forms of divination is absurd, yet her own visions always come to pass.

As Genevieve becomes entangled in the celebrated 'affaire de poisons' of the 1670s, she resolves her own emotional and moral dilemmas and along the way finds an explanation for human accountability and its relation to a divine plan. The visions of her own future change over time as she changes her course of action, and she comes to understand that such visions are probabilities (a nice, modern concept!) of what will happen if things continue on their present path:

> 'My God,' I whispered. 'Causality. Free will. We are all fools, we fortune-tellers. Fate and creation. But how? When did this happen? [...] We shape our own fate, but... I can't understand how....' (pp. 473-4)

Ultimately, then, the Parisian witches and the corrupt of the aristocracy bring disaster upon themselves by their own eschewal of responsibility and their belief that they cannot control their futures. Genevieve's conversation with La Voisin, the leader of the Paris witches and poisoners, is one illustration of this:

> 'Madame, I saw you in the flames.'
> 'But when did you see me in the flames? [...] Your visions are flawed – they show too much and too little all at once [...] Why should I fight my fate? No, I embrace it, and my eternal fame.'
> 'But Madame, the pictures can be changed. Take a new path. God does not only give us fate but free will; there is a choice – '
> 'Bah! What is this drivel?' (p. 492)

More than the burning of the Paris witches and the arrests of the aristocratic poisoners, however, Genevieve's visions also reveal the future end of the French monarchy and the revolution brought about by aristocratic corruption and dismissal of their responsibility to the

general populace. In a sense, and in the context of the novel's seventeenth-century setting, the visions are also apocalyptic. Yet her discovery of human culpability and choice is a direct rejection of the shirking of responsibility found in those who trust in the immortal, medieval marquise. In short, it is a debunking of the pattern of contemporary 'immortals' fiction. Accepting responsibility for her own fate, Genevieve escapes to a new life, guided by her deities of Logic and Reason now tempered by her new-found sense of a divine plan. She finds her salvation in that medieval understanding, while those believing in a fixed, predetermined future are destined to the stake and the guillotine. It is *The Oracle Glass*, then, that more accurately represents the evolution of the morality play. Once again, the soul, or its predictable modern equivalent of the mind, makes the choice between the transient worldly and the enduring abstract, accepting responsibility and making the right choice. Salvation is thereby secured. The novel's deliberate parody of belief in immortals and of the denial of moral accountability contrasts sharply with the usual pattern of 'immortals' fiction. Yet, *The Oracle Glass*, far more sophisticated and informed than most 'immortals' fiction, has thus far enjoyed a much smaller audience and represents a cry in the void of its refutation of it. It is a more gnostic vision. The more popular and enduring examples of the genre of 'immortals' fiction continue to look to the Middle Ages for a golden past, for explanation and absolution, and now, for moral absolution.

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

ANTHEM: AUDEN'S *CÆDMON'S HYMN*

PAUL E. SZARMACH[1]

IT CAN HARDLY COME as a surprise to observe that medievalism is a major element in the poetry of W. H. Auden, especially given the continuing interest in the field.[2] Morton W. Bloomfield, one of the eminent and influential medievalists of the past half-century, fittingly offers one of the early, exemplary scholarly studies of Auden's indebtedness to earlier English literature when more than a generation ago he sourced the line 'Doom is dark and deeper than any sea-dingle' to *Sawles Warde*, a thirteenth-century alliterative prose homily.[3] So specific a connection has its complement in more general

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[1] I am happy to acknowledge with thanks the following, who have assisted my research: Dr. Thomas Amos, Head of Special Collections Waldo Library, Western Michigan University, who gave me access to the Edward Callan Archive, which contains a significant collection of secondary materials on Auden; Dr. Judith Priestman and her most helpful staff at the Modern Papers Reading Room, Department of Western Manuscripts, Bodleian Library, who gave me access to study the Tolkien papers; and Cathleen Blackburn, lawyer for the Tolkein Estate, of the firm Manches and Co., Oxford, through whom I have secured permission to quote from the Tolkien papers.

[2] See Nicholas Howe, 'Praise and Lament: The Afterlife of Old English Poetry in Auden, Hill, and Gunn', in *Words and Works: Studies in Medieval English Language and Literature in Honour of Fred C. Robinson*, ed. by Nicholas Howe and Peter Baker (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp. 293–310 (my thanks to Peter Baker for sharing with me an advance copy of this article); Nirmal Dass, 'Ice, Fire, and Beasts: W. H. Auden's Medievalism', in *Year's Work in Medievalism V/Mittelalter-Rezeption V*, ed. by Ulrich Müller and Kathleen Verduin (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1996), pp. 172–78 (my thanks to Richard Utz for the reference and to Kathleen Verduin for providing me with a copy); M. J. Toswell, 'Auden and Anglo-Saxon', *Medieval English Studies Newsletter*, 37 (December, 1997), 21-28. I have not consulted Robert Horace Boyer, 'Anglo-Saxon and Middle English Influences in the Poetry of W. H. Auden' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1969).

[3] Morton W. Bloomfield, 'Doom is Dark and Deeper than Any Sea-Dingle', *Modern Language Notes*, 63 (1948), 548–52. Bloomfield cites the line from 'Something is Bound to Happen', included in the 1945 edition of Auden's poems. Bloomfield's interest in medievalism is also exemplified in 'Reflections of a Medievalist: Americanism, Medievalism, and the Middle Ages', in *Medievalism in American Culture*, ed. by Bernard Rosenthal and Paul E. Szarmach, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 55 (Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1989), pp. 13–29.

descriptions of Auden's verse. Joseph Warren Beach, e.g., considering Auden's dramatic compositions in the period 1930–38, finds 'a style taken directly from Anglo-Saxon poetry, with its energetic alliterative lines, its kennings, its lack of articles, its descriptive phrases following their nouns, its staccato succession of parallel statements, and even such peculiar rhetorical features as the statement of a positive fact in negative terms.'[4] Beach, as many others before and since, may not be making too hard a distinction between Old (= 'Anglo-Saxon') and Middle English verse forms. The Pulitzer-prize winning *The Age of Anxiety* (1947), though subtitled 'A Baroque Eclogue', shows a development of Auden's four-stress alliterative verse associated with the Old and Middle English line, along with a diction 'more suggestive of Renaissance splendor';[5] in its stylistic complications this poem might be considered Auden's grand effort in the alliterative tradition. A. L. Rowse, among many pointed comments, describes the poem as 'a remarkable *tour de force*' written 'with a ground-bass of the medieval consonantal metre of *Piers Plowman*' owed to Auden's Oxford tutor Nevill Coghill.[6]

It is The Age of Anxiety and its composition history that provides something of a 'new poem' in the Auden canon and yet another remarkable example of Auden's inheritance of earlier English poetic forms. Now Auden is well known, if not ill-famed, for his continual revisions of his body of work, including the suppression of poems once published, especially those espousing earlier political views subsequently recanted or modified.[7] In the authoritative 1976

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[4] Joseph Warren Beach, *The Making of the Auden Canon* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1957; repr. New York: Russell and Russell, 1971), pp. 144–45.

[5] George T. Wright, *W. H. Auden*, rev. edn (New York: Twayne, 1981), pp. 155–56.

[6] A. L. Rowse, *The Poet Auden* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1987), p. 87. Rowse's book is subtitled 'a personal memoir', and personalist it most certainly is in many respects, but Rowse's comments on *The Age of Anxiety* and its verse-form seem quite on the mark. Thomas Cable noted authoritatively on ANSAXNET, however: 'In the whole of Auden's The Age of Anxiety, in all of its 126 pages and more than 2200 lines of verse, I would argue that barely a dozen lines [...] conform to the meter of the Alliterative Revival – the acceptable pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables – as manifested in, say, the works of the Gawain-poet.' The remark came in context of a discussion with O. D. Macrae-Gibson, March 17, 1997.

[7] See Fuller's discussion of 'Some Poems Outside the Canon', in his important *A Reader's Guide to W. H. Auden* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1970), pp. 251–61, for the works involved. Other useful, earlier reference works are: Martin E. Gingerich, *W. H. Auden: A Reference Guide* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1977), which is annotated; B. C. Bloomfield and Edward Mendelson, *W. H. Auden: A Bibliography*,

collection Mendelson presents, for the first time on its own, 'Anthem', probably written about 1945.[8] 'Anthem' derives from an early draft of The Age of Anxiety, and had been printed as part of Epistle to a Godson.[9] It was Mendelson's editorial decision to bring 'Anthem' forward that gave it a potential audience as a poem in its own right. Given this unique publication history, there is correspondingly scant scholarly notice of this poem. In this paper I would like to offer a reading of 'Anthem' in its medievalism and, as will be argued, in its indebtedness to the first named poet in the language, Cædmon.

The text of 'Anthem' is the necessary beginning:

Anthem

Let us praise our Maker, with true passion extol Him.
Let the whole creation give out another sweetness,
Nicer in our nostrils, a novel fragrance
From cleansed occasions in accord together
As one feeling fabric, all flushed and intact,
Phenomena and numbers announcing in one
Multitudinous oecumenical song
Their grand give[n]ness of gratitude and joy,
Peaceable and plural, their positive truth
An authoritative This, an unthreatened Now
When, in love and laughter, each lives itself,
For, united by His Word, cognition and power,
System and Order, are a single glory,
And the pattern is complex, their places safe.[10]

2nd edn (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1972); Edward Callan, 'W. H., Auden: Annotated Checklist II', *Twentieth Century Literature*, 16 (1970), 27–56.

[8] *W. H. Auden: Collected Poems*, ed. by Edward Mendelson (New York: Random House, 1976), p. 13. As Mendelson puts it on p. 11: 'This edition includes all the poems that W. H. Auden wished to preserve in a text that represents his final revisions'. There is now *W. H. Auden: Juvenilia*, ed. by Katherine Bucknell (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), which should soon begin to prove fruitful for further medievalist study. See also now the Clarendon Press series ed. by Katherine Bucknell and Nicholas Jenkins, *Auden Studies*, which has issued volumes 1 (1990), 2 (1994), and 3 (1995).

[9] Ibid.; *Epistle to a Godson and Other Poems* (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 62. The flyleaf says: 'This is W. H. Auden's first collection of new poems since *City Without Walls*, which was published in 1969. It includes thirty-three poems, none of which have appeared before in book form'.

[10] Ed. by Mendelson, p. 257.

The square brackets mark where the version of the poem printed in *Epistle to a Godson* (1972) has a reading not found in *W. H. Auden: Collected Poems* (1976).

The fourteen lines would seem to mark the poem as a sonnet, but in fact there is no Petrarchan or Shakespearean rhyme scheme to bind 'Anthem'; rather the poem is more formally a verse paragraph on a theme that is a hymn of praise or a meditation. The hortatory first line incorporates the audience directly and immediately into the major theme of praise of God. The line has an abruptness, produced by the caesura after 'Maker' (of course, a relatively archaic word for 'poet'), and a loose syntax achieved by using a comma rather than *and*; the result is two relatively sharply chiseled half-lines that emphasize the verbs 'praise' and 'extol'. The second line begins the second sentence which, according to the punctuation, runs the remaining thirteen lines of the poem. The hortatory *Let* in line 2 actually introduces, in its length, a variation from the brief and pointed line one, and not at all a mere parallelism, as the sentence moves into various complications and qualifications of syntax and sense that constitute its overall meaning. Line 3 is the first, arresting line in the poem because of its *n*-alliteration and because of its use of the word 'nostrils', which is rarely admitted into the lexicon of poetry. There is also a touch of the kinaesthetic as the word 'sweetness', perhaps more a word implying tasting rather then smelling, further causes the reader to adjust reference and diction. Line 3, one can argue, is the line that gives away the style of the poem more than any other in its insistent alliteration and in its importation of the word 'nostrils': the poem is a poem of special rhythm and diction. Indeed, as will be mentioned below, line 3 is a classic 'A'-line in Old English prosody where alliteration is structural, not decorative, and where there are four falling stresses, three of which are alliterative.[11]

The focus in the main body of the poem is creation, its beauty, its purity, and its harmony. There is a crescendo of diction that moves from the perceiver of creation, the poet (and also the audience he has exhorted), who smells and feels a pure nature, which is 'cleansed' and 'flushed', to a more abstract or scientific description of 'phenomena and numbers' that, personified as creation can be in the Middle Ages, announce a 'song'. The word 'song' is at the physical middle of the poem; this simple monosyllable receives great emphasis because

[11] The reference is to the famous 'Sievers' five types', a standard and traditional way of describing metrical patterns in five different classifications with variations of patterns within each of the five types. 'A' lines are essentially trochaic (= falling) though minor variations are allowed, as with the indefinite article in Auden's line 3b, and they are more numerous than any of the other types.

difficult, Greco-Latin polysyllabic words like 'phenomena', 'multitudinous', and 'oecumenical' – again, most 'unpoetic' or specialized – prepare the audience for an abrupt, counterpointed monosyllabic, native Anglo-Saxon word. 'Phenomena' invokes the world of science, whereas 'oecumenical' carries with it a connotation of theology, but these complicated worlds yield to simple song. The content of that song in its unity and multiplicity constitute the rest of 'Anthem'. Creation announces 'their grand give[n]ness'. The earlier reading 'givenness', which seems preferable to the later 'giveness', would seem to stress what they are given and perhaps what they give as well. ['Creation', as an abstract singular, is more likely to have a plural pronoun referent, 'they', in British English than in American English, where 'it' would be preferred.] This 'give[n]ness', which is the likely modern reflex of the uncommon Old English word 'gifness', would seem to mean 'grace' as it does in OE.[12] The song that Creation is given and that Creation gives, which is, as all gifts of grace, both contained within the possessor and demonstrated outside of the possessor, is a song of doublets in nouns (mainly) and adjectives: gratitude and joy, peaceable and plural, This and Now, love and laughter, cognition and power, System and Order. The movement of diction between the relatively concrete to the abstract, which occurs in the first half of the poem, occurs here as well where there is laughter but also Order. The theme of the one and the many, pervasive in the first half of the poem ('one/Multitudinous oecumenical song') furnishes the appropriate conclusion in the 'single glory' described in the last, alliterative line. This line is a line of two alliterating halves (as are 1, 3, 5, 9–14)[13] with light *p*-alliteration for structure and some decoration ('complex'), but the unexpressed copula in the second half (or b-verse) leads to emphasis on the monosyllable 'safe', which carries the theme of peaceable harmony in the order of creation to its proper conclusion. The simple connective 'And', at the head of the line, is not all that necessary for the sense, but it does honor a standard metrical feature of Old English verse.

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[12] See the sparse entry *s.v.* in Joseph Bosworth and C. Northcote Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), and also the Toller *Supplement* (1955).

[13] Normally, a comma marks the caesura, which in the representation of OE verse is presented with extra spacing. Not all the lines cited here, admittedly, are so simple in their execution. Line 7, which has no strong caesura and features light, but not frontal, alliteration, is successful precisely it does not follow the reigning pattern of the lines in 'Anthem'.

Auden's *Anthem* bears a likeness in style and meaning to *Cædmon's Hymn* to such a remarkable degree that it may be best considered to be an imitation of the Anglo-Saxon poem:

Cædmon's Hymn
Nu sculon herigean heofonrices weard,
meotodes meahte and his modgeþanc,
weorc wuldorfæder, swa he wundra gehwæs,
ece drihten, or onstealde.
He ærest sceop eorðan bearnum
heofon to hrofe, halig scyppend;
þa middangeard moncynnes weard,
ece drihten, æfter teode
firum foldan, frea ælmihtig.[14]

[Now let us praise the Guardian of the heavenly kingdom, the powers of the Measurer and His mind's purpose, the work of the Father of heavenly glory, as he, eternal Lord, established the beginning of every wonderful thing. He first created heaven as a roof for the sons of the earth, holy Creator; then the Guardian of Mankind, eternal Lord, afterwards adorned the earth for mankind, Lord almighty. (My translation)]

Cædmon's hymn of praise offers typical, if not originary and exemplary, Anglo-Saxon verse. Each line offers either consonantal alliteration or vocalic alliteration (all vowels alliterate with each other, according to theory), and the lines are tight and compact, not generally more than the minimum of four syllables per half-line and eight syllables per full line. Lines such as 2a and 3a are 'classic' 'A'-lines, e.g. alliteration is structural, i.e., it defines the line. Repetition and formula are characteristic: lines 4a and 8a are repeats, while line 1b, *heofonrices weard*, and line 7b, *mancynnes weard*, are formulaic in that the half-line formula is 'genitive + *weard*'. Compounding is also present in *modgeþanc* and *wuldorfæder*, but there are no true

[14] Here I present the West Saxon version, as ed. by Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie in *The Anglo-Saxon Minor Poems*. Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records, 6 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), p. 106; the Northumbrian version appears on p. 105. The full-scale critcial edition remains *The Manuscripts of Cædmon's Hymn and Bede's Death Song*, ed. by Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie (New York: Columbia University Press, 1937). *Cædmon's Hymn* appears in many a school text; see, e.g., John Collins Pope, *Seven Old English Poems* (New York, 1981), pp. 3–6, a new edition which was originally published by Bobbs-Merrill in 1966, and also *A Guide to Old English*, ed. by Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson, 5th edn (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1992), where the poem appears in the immediate context of the Old English translation of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, pp. 220–25.

kennings, i.e., neither compound is metaphorical enough.[15] Variation, viz., a central idea, concept, figure, or character, is referred to in multiple ways, is obvious, as here God, who is called 'Guardian...Father...Lord...Creator' etc.

In comparison, Auden is a similar alliterative poet in his insistence on an alliteration that defines a line and otherwise makes demands on standard syntax and sense, but he is not Cædmonian – or Anglo-Saxon for that matter – in the looseness of his lines. Here Rowse is right in describing the alliterative patterns as fourteenth century, where the lines are comparatively diluted, admitting more unstressed syllables. The traditional explanation for the difference in line pressure is that the language changed from a synthetic or inflected language to a more analytic or uninflected language, which requires more function words to replace inflected forms, thus *heofonrices* is now rendered 'of the heavenly kingdom' – four words, not one. Auden does not work at compounding, formulas, or kennings in his diction. Indeed, Anglo-Saxonists did not yet properly understand the genesis, role, and function of formulaic verse until 1953 when Francis P. Magoun brought the insights of Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord from Homer to Old English.[16]

Cædmon's poem is not all style, however – nor is Auden's – but the meaning of *Cædmon's Hymn* in Anglo-Saxon studies has been secondary. Cædmon may praise God for His creation, but by and large Anglo-Saxonists see less an artifact of religious or hieratic verse than a document of literary history, especially in the context of the discussion Bede provides in *Historia Ecclesiastica* IV.24.[17] Bernard F. Huppé's Augustinian reading of the poem is one of the signal exceptions.[18] In Bede Cædmon is the illiterate herdsman who received the gift of song from an angel in a dream and who was able to compose biblical verse through memory and rumination: '[Cædmon] learned all he could by listening to [his teachers] and then, memorizing it and ruminating over it, like some clean animal chewing the cud, he turned it into the most

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[15] A kenning may be defined as a 'compound metaphor', as for example, *swanrad*, 'swan-road', to signify 'sea' when the sea is calm, or *hwælrad*, 'whale-road', to signify 'sea' when the sea is rough. But the matter of the kenning is not without its complications; see Stanley B. Greenfield, *The Interpretation of Old English Poems* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), who offers analysis of various features of Old Engish versecraft.

[16] Francis P. Magoun, 'Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry', *Speculum*, 28 (1953), 446–67.

[17] *Bede's Ecclesiatical History of the English People*, ed. and trans. by Bertram Colgrave and R.A. B. Mynors (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), pp. 414–21 [Latin and English translation *en face*].

[18] Bernard F. Huppé, *Doctrine and Poetry* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1959), pp. 99–130.

melodious verse.'[19] In Anglo-Saxon studies the story of Cædmon explains how the oral techniques of pagan verse become transmuted to Christian literature in the vernacular, such as the biblical paraphrases *Genesis A* and *B*.

Auden did not need an angel to give him the gift of composing alliterative verse in the manner of Old and Middle English poets, but he did need schooling, and schooling he received at Oxford. In his Inaugural Lecture as Professor of Poetry, delivered at Oxford on June 11, 1956, Auden gives his literary biography, sketching at one point the difference between a scholar and a poet ('a young poet seldom does well in his examinations') and observing with some self-irony that a poet's 'immediate desire can even be to attend a lecture':

> I remember one I attended, delivered by Professor Tolkien. I do not remember a single word he said but at a certain point he recited, and magnificently, a long passage of *Beowulf*. I was spellbound. This poetry, I knew, was going to be my dish. I became willing, therefore, to work at Anglo-Saxon because, unless I did, I should never be able to read this poetry. I learned to read it, however sloppily, and Anglo-Saxon and Middle English poetry have been one of my strongest, most lasting influences.[20]

Certainly Auden was an indifferent scholar. M. J. Toswell describes the student grind of papers and examinations that Auden likely faced.[21]

In his authoritative biography of Auden Humphrey Carpenter fills out more of the details:

> [Auden] took enough trouble with Anglo-Saxon to be able to appreciate *The Dream of the Rood*, *The Wanderer* and *The Seafarer*, as well as some of the *Exeter Book* riddles and at least part of *Beowulf*. Among Middle English poetry he was particularly attracted by *Piers Plowman*, preferring it to Chaucer.[22]

Though Nevill Coghill was Auden's tutor, C. L. Wrenn taught Auden philology and the history of the English Language, for which pains Auden observed: '"Wrenn was so much a philologist that he couldn't

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[19] Ed. and trans. by Colgrave and Mynors, p. 419.

[20] The Lecture appears as 'Making, Knowing, and Judging' in Auden's collection of essays, *The Dyer's Hand* (New York: Vintage International, 1989; orig. Random House, 1962), pp. 31–60 (pp. 41–42).

[21] Toswell, pp. 21–22.

[22] Humphrey Carpenter, *W. H. Auden: A Biography* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981), pp. 55. The biographical details in this paragraph derive from Carpenter. See also Richard Davenport-Hines, *Auden* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1995), esp. pp. 51–60.

read anything beyond the words."'[23] Auden's examiners were Tolkien, Ernest de Selincourt, Allen Mawer (Liverpool University), and David Nichol Smith – all of whom were unyielding to the candidate, who later observed: 'I didn't do a stroke of work.'[24] The stress of the examination ordeal did take its toll on Auden who, after the Anglo-Saxon paper was found 'weeping' in his rooms; Stephen Spender, however, attributed the weeping to Auden's eyes, not to the man, for Auden's eyes were weak and watery.[25]

Yet, despite a Third in the subject and a different and unsympathetic tutor in Wrenn, one may still trace Tolkien's influence on Auden and his view of Old English poetry, if somewhat indirectly. Tolkien's teaching notes and papers concern, among several topics, the 'old chestnuts' taught in a basic Old English course through *Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader*, where the tenth reading is *Cædmon's Hymn*.[26] Folder A 29(a) 2 of the Tolkien papers is part of a run of files of lecture notes on various pieces in *Sweet's Reader*. It bears the title 'Bede's Account of the Poet Cædmon', and was possibly written in 1927 as was the previous Folder A 29(a) 1. On fol. 82r Tolkien observes that *Cædmon's Hymn* 'seems dull', a comment which I take to be the classic teacher's ploy to engage sympathy with the student, for then Tolkien begins to argue towards the 'interesting' in the piece by reviewing Anglo-Saxon history: 'This was the astonishing springtime of Anglo-Saxon (or English) culture in the 7th and 8th centuries [...]' (fol. 82v). Tolkien is leading the student(s) to this high conclusion:

> that, I think is the way in which the history that lies behind your being asked to study 'piece x' in Sweet's reader should be present to your mind. Part of a long story of effort, achievements, and disasters: part of a great *disciplina* of both art and of learning. And your own labour should be warmed by the noble pieties: *pietas* toward your own land, *pietas*

[23] Carpenter, p. 55.

[24] Carpenter, p. 81.

[25] Carpenter, p. 80 and n.2: 'Stephen Spender comments of this ... "Auden had very weak and watery eyes (hence the green eye shade). Whilst he was taking his Finals – they not he – wept continuously. He had been overworking before he took Finals and was in an exhausted state."'

[26] See 'A List of the Papers of J. R. R. Tolkien (1892–1973)', compiled by Judith Priestman, which is available at the Bodleian Library, The Modern Papers and John Johnson Reading Room (Room 132).

> towards the past. He that despiseth antiquity shall be contemned by posterity – or forgotten. (fol. 83r)[27]

Tolkien goes on to offer a psychological reading of Cædmon more fully and, on fol. 89r, to offer a translation of the *Hymn*, one of some seven, interconnected translations I count in the various files. Auden's *Anthem* is more Middle English than Old English in its alliterative style, but Tolkien's emphasis on *pietas* is a likely inspiration for the Cædmonian touches in the poem. In her estimate of Auden's 'Christian soul' Anne Fremantle observes:

> Auden is also – perhaps he would prefer to say above all – a Christian. Not a Christian poet: simply a poet who tries to be a Christian. He has forcefully repudiated the whole idea of a Christian art, even that of a Christian culture [...]. 'There can only be a Christian spirit in which an artist, a scientist, works or does not work.'[28]

That spirit is evident in *Anthem*.

Auden and Tolkien maintained their relationship to the end (both died in September, 1973).[29] For Auden's 60th birthday celebration Tolkien wrote 'For W. H. A.', an original composition in Old English with facing page translation.[30] The poem draws on allusions to the *Battle of Maldon* and the figure Wystan, who appears at line 297 in the Old English, and adapts the heroic style. The translation is rather free, ending, after the allusion to the original Wystan,

> [...] He [= Auden] follows after,
> and now anew that name [= Wystan] uses

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[27] Tolkien's text is a teacher's working text with cross-outs and insertions, etc. I have reproduced the important italicizing (underlining in the original), but I have made no effort to produce a faithful, diplomatic transcription.

[28] Anne Fremantle, 'Anima Naturaliter Christiana', in *A Tribute to Wystan Hugh Auden on His Sixtieth Birthday, Shenandoah* [The Washington and Lee University Review], 18.2 (Winter, 1967), 69–77, (p. 69).

[29] Nicholas Howe notes the Tolkien sweatshirt worn by Auden in photograph 64 in *W. H. Auden: A Tribute*, ed. by Stephen Spender (New York: MacMillan, 1975). Howe correctly identifies the garment as a sweatshirt, not a sweater as indicated in the caption.

[30] Original composition in Old English is as old as the subject, as Michael Murphy points out in 'Scholars at Play: A Short History of Composing in Old English', *Old English Newsletter*, 15.2 (Spring, 1982), 26–36. Translation can also go the other way, though rarely, as in Peter Glassgold's 'little Old English anthology of American modernist poetry', *Hwæt* (Washington, DC: Sun and Moon Press, 1985). George H. Brown reviews the 25 American poems Glassgold turned to OE in *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, 9 February 1986, pp. 3 and 11.

to his own honour. Auden some call him,
and so among men may he be remembered ever,
where as they sit by themselves for solace of heart
the word-lovers, wise and skilful,
revive the vanished voices of makers.
These lines about you I linked together,
though weighted by years, Wystan my friend:
a tardy tribute and token of thanks.
J.R.R.T.[31]

Is there a quiet, private, good-natured joke here in that Tolkien offers a translation for his famous student who got a Third? Auden, after all, when he had the chance to write for his inspiring teacher on Tolkien's seventieth birthday, crafted 'A Short Ode to a Philologist' that, though praising language and its study ('Dame Philology is our Queen still'), is without an Old English facing translation [!] as it alludes, in closing, to that signal moment in Auden's undergraduate career:

No hero is immortal till he dies
Nor is a tongue,
But a lay of Beowulf's language, too, can be sung,
Ignoble, maybe, to the young,
Having no monsters and no gore
To speak of, yet not without its beauties
For those who have learned to hope: a lot of us are grateful for
What J.R.R. Tolkien has done
As bard to Anglo-Saxon.[32]

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[31] J. R. R.Tolkien, 'For W. H. A.', in *A Tribute to Wystan Hugh Auden on His Sixtieth Birthday*, *Shenandoah*, 18.2 (Winter, 1967), 96–97. Compare the Anglo-Saxon:

[...] He nú forð tela
níwan stefne þæs naman brúceð
him to weorðmynde, Wíhstan úre.
Swa sceal he á mid mannum mære wunian,
þær sittað searopancle sundor tó rúne,
snyttrum styriað sóðgied scopa.

Ic þis gied be þé to grétinge
awræc wintrum fród, Wihstan léofa,
þeah ic þorfte hraðor panceword sprecan.
Rægnold Hrædmóding.

[32] W. H. Auden, 'A Short Ode to a Philologist', in *English and Medieval Studies presented to J. R. R. Tolkien on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. by Norman Davis and C. L. Wrenn (London: Allen & Unwin, 1962), pp. 11–12 (p. 12).

In that higher sense, where tradition, individual talent, and creative mimesis form their own trinity, Auden himself proved to be an Anglo-Saxon bard, though using, in 'Anthem', a Middle English filter. The epitaph on Auden's plaque in Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey, appropriately reads:

> In the praise of his days
> Teach the free man
> how to praise.[33]

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[33] See photo in Spender, ed., p. 251.

'*IN RAMA SONAT GEMITUS*...' THE BECKET STORY IN A DANISH MEDIEVALIST MUSIC DRAMA, *A VIGIL FOR THOMAS BECKET*

NILS HOLGER PETERSEN

1. A Personal Introduction

WHEN I COMPOSED MY *A Vigil for Thomas Becket* I was just about to start working on my theologico-musical doctoral project concerned with the medieval Latin music drama, the so-called liturgical drama[1] which – like so many other creative medieval phenomena – went through a golden period during the twelfth century. It did seem tempting to combine my long interest in the tragic and famous conflict with my interest in the only living form of drama which would have been known to the protagonists of my drama in spe. Thus, the form in which I finally wrote my music drama was inspired as much by the medieval liturgical drama as by the traditions of the later opera.

To discuss an artistic work of one's own in an academic context carries with it an obligation to be rather matter-of-fact.[2] My comments in the following will thus be limited to explain the connection between the genre of the Latin music drama of the medieval Church and my music drama as well as to present the interpretation that I have given of the historical figures and circumstances in my opera. I will not otherwise analyze or comment on my music or on the libretto although I will in the course of the presentation quote a few places.

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[1] This is a modern notion. In the Middle Ages a number of different notions were used like *ordo* and *officium* or *representatio* and *ludus* which to a certain degree, although not systematically, reflect the degree of liturgical dependency. See Glynne Wickham, *The Medieval Theatre*, 3rd rev. edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 36, 40, 43, 47, 49, and 51.

[2] This paper is a revised version of the paper that I gave at the Twelfth International Conference on Medievalism at Christ Church College, Canterbury, August 14 1997, as an introduction to a partly live, partly taped presentation of my Thomas Becket opera at St. Gregory's Centre. The Danish baritone, Jørn Pedersen, sang solo parts (as John of Norwich) accompanied by British pianist, Roger Steptoe. Jørn Pedersen performed as John of Norwich at the production of the opera in Copenhagen, March 1990 and March 1998, which were conducted by Svend Aaquist and directed by Anne Fugl. I am indebted to Leslie Workman in several ways. In addition to his scholarly achievements, I am personally grateful for the generous interest he has taken in the work which is the subject of this paper.

2. The Structure of the Medieval Latin Music Drama

The earliest appearances of medieval texts which later scholarship generally has characterized as dramatic are simply short liturgical ceremonies. They consist of a sung dialogue based on the Gospel of the empty grave inserted into the Easter morning liturgy most often before or during the introductory ceremonies for the Easter Day Mass or towards the end of the night office, the office of Matins. Such ceremonies are preserved from the early tenth century. The reason why this not very theatrical, but clearly devotional practice often has been labelled a "drama" is primarily the later history of the dialogue. Its short sentences were some times (for instance in the twelfth century) incorporated into long complicated, much more theatre-like constructions with episodes no longer exclusively based on holy scripture. And secondly: even the mentioned short ceremonies were acted out in symbolically choreographed, but nevertheless representational ways.[3]

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[3] Scholarship on liturgical drama is vast and has at the same time been hampered by its division according to modern academic disciplines. Among the most important contributions concerning its genesis written by literary scholars in this century – also taking issue with the question of how to define the concept of drama – must be mentioned Karl Young, *The Drama of the Medieval Church* (London: Clarendon,1933), 2 vols, and O. B. Hardison, *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1965). Very important, although not nearly as complete as intended are the editions of Easter texts in *Lateinische Osterfeiern und Osterspiele*, ed. by Walther Lipphardt (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975–90), 9 vols. For a fairly recent survey with bibliography of this scholarship I refer to C. Clifford Flanigan, 'Medieval Latin Music-Drama', in *The Theatre of Medieval Europe: New Research in Early Drama*, ed. by Eckehard Simon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 21–41. In the later years musicological contributions have become much more important than earlier, I refer primarily to Susan Rankin, 'Liturgical Drama', in *The New Oxford History of Music II: The Early Middle Ages to 1300*, ed. by Richard Crocker and David Hiley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 310–56. See also David Hiley, *Western Plainchant. A Handbook* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), pp. 250–73. For recent contributions raising critical issues concerning hermeneutics, terminology, and interdisciplinarity in liturgical drama scholarship I refer to the first part of Johann Drumbl, *Fremde Texte* (Milano: Unicopli, 1984), to Andrew Hughes, 'Liturgical Drama: Falling Between the Disciplines', in Simon, ed. (1991), pp. 42–62, C. Clifford Flanigan, 'Medieval Liturgy and the Arts: *Visitatio Sepulchri* as Paradigm', in *Liturgy and the Arts in the Middle Ages: Studies in Honour of C. Clifford Flanigan*, ed. by Louise Lillie and Nils Holger Petersen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 1996), pp. 9–35, and to two papers by myself: Nils Holger Petersen, 'The Musical and Liturgical Composition of Visitatio Sepulchri Offices', in *Cantus Planus. Papers Read at the 7th Meeting in Sopron, Hungary, Sept. 1995*, ed. by Laszlo Dobszay (Budapest: Hungarian Academy

It has been argued that the ritual meaning of this re-enaction of the events at the empty grave on Easter morning was to bring them to life again in the sense that the participants in the ritual would become spiritually contemporary with the holy apostles and thus like them be able to receive the efficacious Gospel of the resurrection.[4]

Judging by the way the early liturgical dramas surface in the liturgical manuscripts, in any case, there appears to be no reason to think of these practices as fundamentally set apart from the general ritual context. Even so, these and other parts of the medieval liturgy having more or less representational or "dramatic" qualities gradually seem to have led to some kind of "genre" between traditional liturgical ceremonial and what a modern age would think of as dramatic performances giving rise to not just one but several different genres of devotional theatre. To these belonged the Latin liturgical ceremonies sung in Frankish-Gregorian chant, others were the mainly spoken vernacular dramas, as for instance the English so-called cycle plays and similar continental plays. Also Italian sung devotional dramatic "laude" and semi-Latin, semi-vernacular passion plays and laments of the Virgin form part of this overall picture.

A basic feature that seems to recur in these various types of dramatic texts and which in my opinion is a constitutive factor in the genesis of these genres has to do with two different liturgical modes in the holy actions. In one such mode the liturgy takes place in the eternal now; the participants are moved out of their historical time and place into a sacred space and time where they are confronted with the efficaciously sacred through divine announcements, commands, and judgements, and where they confront the sacred in their own responses to the mentioned messages in praise and confession, or in prayer. In the other mode, however, the liturgy is narrative, representing in one way or another the holy mythology or history upon which the theological ideas and the religious beliefs rest. Here belong the biblical readings from the history of Jesus, but also the histories of both the

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of Sciences, 1998), pp. 451-62, and 'Les textes polyvalents du Quem quaeritis à Winchester au dixième siècle', in *Le Drame Liturgique Médiéval: Sens et representations*, ed. by Marie-Noël Colette (Paris, forthcoming). – A recent publication, Lynette R. Muir, *The Biblical Drama of Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), offers a useful theatre historical survey containing an introductory chapter on liturgical drama (pp. 13–27). The presentation in this chapter, however, is not satisfactory regarding the role of the music and – far more problematic in the context of the book – concerning the question of drama and liturgy where it does not seem informed by recent scholarship.

[4] C. Clifford Flanigan, 'The Liturgical Context of the Quem Queritis Trope', *Comparative Drama*, 8 (1974), 45–60.

Christian communities (including the lives of their saints) and the Jewish people. And from early times (the fourth century) also processions commemorating particular instances from the life of Jesus (notably the Palm Sunday procession) belong at least partly to this representational mode.[5]

From the very earliest known *Quem quaeritis* ceremonies the Latin music dramas seem to move back and forth between the mentioned two modes, always shifting directly from biblical representation (later also non biblical representation) to liturgical praising. In the more complex texts a conscious play with this dichotomy can be noted.[6]

My interest in writing an opera on the theme of Thomas Becket was at the time also connected to my feelings about the inadequacy of modern liturgies (in particular in my own Danish Protestant culture) where both liturgical praisings and readings as well as other reflections upon the historical myths of Christianity seem to have moved into a separate liturgical or ecclesiastical sphere. This stands in a clear contrast to the liturgies of the Middle Ages where the consciousness of a sacred place and sacred actions certainly were much more pronounced than in a modern age, but where – at least to the distant modern observer – there at the same time seems to have been far more room for both artistic inventiveness and playfulness and – last but not least – for the integration of individual human experiences.

John Stevens – in a very convincing discussion of the concepts of expressivity and meaning in medieval liturgical chant (including the liturgical drama) – has called for some caution here. Even the laments of the liturgical drama[7] are not necessarily to be thought of as outbreaks of emotions as we may hear them today on the basis of several hundred years' operatic and individualized emotional musical compositions since the Florentine academies brought about the idea that music should express emotions in the texts they set.

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[5] Cf. my forthcoming paper 'Quem quaeritis in sepulchro? The Visit to the Sepulchre and Easter Processions in Piacenza 65', in *Il Libro del Maestro. Codice 65 dell'archivio Capitolare della cattedrale di Piacenza (sec. XII). Atti del convegno, marzo 1997*, ed. by Pierre Racine (Piacenza, forthcoming), where I discuss the meaning of processions in this context.

[6] My hitherto unpublished Ph.D. dissertation (in Danish, on the liturgical origin and the genre of the medieval Latin music drama (University of Copenhagen, 1994) deals precisely with this issue presenting also close readings of for instance the *Ludus Danielis* from the 13th century). An English language version is under preparation, to be published by The Edwin Mellen Press.

[7] John Stevens, *Words and Music in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 351–61, where the laments of Rachel over her children are analyzed.

The liturgical drama does, nevertheless, bring in human experiences (in both words and music) and – in restricted ways – a certain level of human feeling as for instance in the lament of Daniel after he has been condemned to the lion's den (in the *Ludus Danielis* preserved from 13th-century Beauvais). The laments of the liturgical drama do – to a more or less strict degree – belong to the liturgy, they are certainly devotional, intended as parts of a religious (and in the case of Daniel to some extend popular) celebration, and they may to a high degree be marked by general narrative or liturgical functional traits. On the other hand, this does not, I believe, exclude, rather it seems to include that they at the same time (at least some times) are able to represent individual feelings. In the case of Daniel the range of musical styles used in the play seems to underscore this point.[8]

In my opinion also the later opera has often retained some (more or less subconscious) traits from the liturgical prehistory of music drama. Such a continuity, however, is not the main theme for this study since my use of the traditions of the Latin music dramas is a deliberate attempt to use the described twofold structure of the medieval liturgy – although this idea had not yet been worked out scholarly at the time I composed my music drama. At the same time, of course, I do depend on the operatic traditions including the (few) works that in a more deliberate way have drawn upon medieval music dramatic antecedents as for instance Benjamin Britten's *Noye's Fludde* (1957) and Peter Maxwell Davies's *The Martyrdom of St Magnus* (1976).[9]

In *A Vigil for Thomas Becket* the basic idea is to let the dramatic representation of a narrative crystallize certain themes that are used as elements for a contemporary celebration. At this point another medievalistic aspect enters into focus. What kind of modern interest can there be in the remote story of the archbishop who was killed in his cathedral on 29 December 1170?

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[8] John Stevens does not discuss the lament of Daniel. For the musical and verbal text see 'Ludus Danielis Belouacensis', ed. by Mathias Bielitz as 'Anhang' in *Hilarii Aurelianensis Versus et ludi*, ed. by Walther Bulst and M. L. Bulst-Thiele (Leiden: Brill, 1989), no. 47. Rankin (1990), pp. 351–52, and certainly Margot Fassler, 'The Feast of Fools and *Danielis ludus*', in *Plainsong in the Age of Polyphony*, ed. by Thomas Forrest Kelly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 94, seems to support such a reading of Daniel's lament. In particular I refer to Margot Fassler's fascinating study of this play and it's theologico-cultural meaning.

[9] See my study, 'Biblisch-mythische, mittelalterliche liturgisch-musikalische und literarische Traditionen in der Oper *The Martyrdom of Saint Magnus* (1976) von Peter Maxwell Davies', in *Kontext 4. Religion und Literatur. Aspekte eines Vergleichs*, ed. by Peter Tschuggnall (Salzburg: Müller-Speiser, forthcoming).

3. Thomas Becket and Henry II in a 20th-century Perspective

It is well known that the Becket conflict has attracted much interest over the centuries. I will not discuss the Becket reception as such, but only make the comment that the interests in the medieval story in Jean Anouilh's, Christopher Fry's, and in T. S. Eliot's plays[10] are mutually different and altogether different from what I had in mind. Both Anouilh and Fry – although in almost opposite ways – are occupied with the intense psychological drama between the King and his former chancellor, archbishop Thomas, friends who became enemies as Thomas moved his loyalty from the royal to the divine service. Eliot created a modern liturgical play, to a high degree concentrated on bringing the difficult psychological elements of the story into a spiritual frame dealing with the question of how a person can transcend his own self to become a 'saint'. Even if Eliot does incorporate a certain modern distance – especially in the prose comments of the four knights towards the end of the play – it mainly serves to inform the spectators or readers of the insurmountable distance between the divine and human, between the holy and the profane. In contrast, I wanted to highlight the distance between the Middle Ages and *our* time, although I have not wanted to give up the fascinating psychological elements of the story either.

The Middle Ages, of course, only exist in the creative minds of later generations. The attraction (for me) of the historical periods in question is and was not the least that they are so unfamiliar to our ways of thinking. This is brought out very clearly, indeed, in the Becket conflict. Incomprehensibility, on the other hand, seems to have been felt by at least one of its protagonists already during the conflict. King Henry seems not to have understood what happened with Thomas when he became an archbishop. Thomas may not have had similar problems with Henry, but then he seems to have disregarded what he must have been able to anticipate in Henry's reactions.

At the time I wrote my music drama I had not yet heard of New Historicism nor read anything of the kind. Yet, the concept of the *alterity* of the Middle Ages which Hans Robert Jauss has brought into a fruitful hermeneutical approach to medieval literature must have been a reality in my mind.[11] The whole of my Becket-opera is fundamentally built on such an approach to the story.

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[10] Jean Anouilh, *Becket ou l'honneur de Dieu* (Paris: La table ronde, 1959), Christopher Fry, *Curtmantle* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), and T. S. Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral* (London: Faber and Faber, 1935).

[11] Hans Robert Jauss, 'The Alterity and Modernity of Medieval Literature', *New Literary History*, 10.2 (1979), 181–229.

Very soon upon starting to work constructively with a plan to create a music drama based on the Becket story, I decided not to present any of the dramatic confrontations, neither the clashes between Henry and Thomas in Westminster (1163), Clarendon, or Northhampton (1164), nor the murder itself.[12] The conflict between Henry and Thomas was probably partly based on psychological factors readily understandable to a modern age, factors connected to the personal relationship of Henry and Thomas and to the royal expectations that Thomas as an archbishop would ensure good relations between the Crown and the Church. On the other hand, the issues of the conflict concerning the legal rights of the clerics as well as the division of power between the King and the Church are obvious examples of the *alterity* of the Middle Ages. Paraphrasing a statement by Hans Robert Jauss it must be recognized that the significance for us of this conflict is only to be obtained by a reflective passage through the *alterity* of these issues and the society in which such issues were immediately relevant and understandable, and of the literature recording it.[13]

I will illustrate this point through a concrete example. A legal case from 1163 demonstrates what kind of problems formed at least part of the growing conflict between Henry and Thomas. A canon from Bedford, Philip de Broi, had been accused of murdering a knight but had been acquitted in the local bishop's court. As the case was reopened by an itinerant royal judge, Simon fitzPeter, the canon – in the words of one of the early biographers, Garnier of Pont-Sainte-Maxence – 'lost his temper and insulted him [the judge] grossly'.[14]

The judge complained to the King who threatened with a drastic secular punishment for the canon. Thomas then stepped in to protect Philip. In the end it was agreed that the archiepiscopal court should try him both for the murder and the offence against the royal judge. The outcome was that he (again) was acquitted of the murder, but punished for his insult to lose his prebend and all his revenues for two years; his income should be given to the poor at the discretion of the King. Further he should receive a public whipping in the presence of the insulted judge. Possibly, even one or two years of banishment were added to this. The King was appalled at the mildness of this punishment.[15]

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[12] I refer throughout this study to Frank Barlow, *Thomas Becket* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1986), and W. L. Warren, *Henry II* (London: Methuen, 1973) for a historical treatment of Thomas Becket and Henry II. In this paper only historical details of particular importance to my own work will be discussed.

[13] Jauss (1979), p. 198.

[14] *Garnier's Becket*, ed. by Janet Shirley (Felinfach: Llanerch, 1975/1996), p. 22.

[15] Barlow (1986), p. 93, and Shirley (1975/1996), 23.

The well-recorded episode among other things makes it clear how willing both King and Archbishop were (and how necessary it must have seemed to them) to enter into conflicts which to a modern age seem to be routine legal matters. The legal situation was not clear; and whereas we can easily sympathize with the royal demands of equality before the Law, it is equally as difficult to conceive the punishment mentioned as an expression of leniency on the part of the archiepiscopal court, just as the reopening of the case strikes a modern observer as an example of the arbitrariness of the royal justice (but apparently accepted also by the Archbishop) – even more so as the King seems to have accepted the original verdict acquitting Philip of the murder.

What was happening was a clash between the traditional secular laws of England and the more modern canon law. In the twelfth century the latter was in the process of establishing itself and of modifying the traditional legal thinking in terms of the Gregorian movement. Since the middle of the eleventh century this movement had almost revolutionized the papacy and the whole institution of the Roman Church. As one of the consequences the episcopal courts were led into positions that could easily create conflicts with the established royal legal institutions. All this, of course, has been dealt with by historical scholarship, also concerning the Becket conflict. My aim with these rather crude remarks is to point to the inaccessibility of these legal matters for the modern reader who is not a specialist in medieval social or legal history. This also explains why I wanted to avoid taking up such issues in my drama at the same time as I did not want to reduce the Becket conflict to the psychological components detached from their historical social context. My solution – if it can be said to be one – was to reach the significance of the issues by a reflective passage through their *alterity* (cf. Hans Robert Jauss).

The historians dealing with the Becket conflict have been divided in two groups. First, there are the ecclesiastically oriented who have described Henry as a tyrant and Thomas as a more or less saintly person, transformed or shown in his 'real' self only after his consecration as archbishop (in 1162). This group obviously has the historical priority as this is how the case was presented with more or less conviction in the early literature based on the belief that God had shown Thomas to be a saint and thus to have been basically right in his judgements no matter how difficult some of them even at the time had seemed to be to accept.[16] The other group is definitely the more common in modern scholarship and includes the recent major studies by Frank Barlow and W. L. Warren. Here the starting point of the

[16] Barlow (1986), pp. 274–75. See also R. W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (New York: Hutchinson's University Library, 1953), pp. 254–55.

conflict is usually seen as Thomas's tendency to overplay his hand when bringing canon law to bear on the conflicts with the King over the so-called ancient customs of the realm which since the councils of Westminster (1163) and Clarendon (1164) turned out to be the stumbling-block of Thomas's archepiscopacy. I will quote a typical statement by Frank Barlow, a general assessment of Thomas as an archbishop:

> Things had gone dreadfully wrong. At any point between 1162 and the martyrdom it was, and is, not unreasonable to take the view that Thomas's career had peaked as chancellor. He had done extra-ordinarily well in that office. But as archbishop he had floundered and then panicked. The difficulties he had to face would have tested any incumbent of the see, and he was not given much time for growing into the office before he had to meet the challenge. Thomas's past – his dependence on the King and his worldliness – doomed him to failure. Nevertheless, if we accept that he had not actively aimed at the archbishopric and that the scheme was entirely Henry's, he was more a victim of circumstance than an Icarus. Everyone had expected him to be a worldly archbishop, and would have tolerated its consequences, some of which would have benefited both Church and King. It is ironical that, bytrying to refashion his way of life, he disappointed even those who had disapproved of his appointment and satisfied few beyond some zealots in his household.[17]

The evaluations of the modern scholars run the risk of becoming anachronistic, assessing Thomas's achievements and possibilities by modern socio-political or psychological standards. The radical change in Thomas's life when he became archbishop was treated differently but in a no less problematic way by the early biographers (and in modified forms by some modern followers). In his William Urry lecture Frank Barlow commented on this aspect of the medieval reception:

> On the whole, with more or less conviction and comprehensiveness, they chose to explain it away by making the future saint a dissimulator and hypocrite. His worldliness when serving worldly masters was merely the necessary cover for his secret pieties and austerities, necessary because it enabled him to fulfil the destiny decreed for him by God.[18]

In contrast to both these groups I wanted to take all the existing pieces of information at face value, but to combine them with the realization of their *alterity*.

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[17] Barlow (1986), pp. 117–19, compare pp. 69–70.

[18] Frank Barlow, *Thomas Becket and his Clerks* (Canterbury: Friends of Canterbury Cathedral, 1987), p.11.

4. *In Rama sonat gemitus...*

One historical source of primary importance is not usually brought into the picture painted by historians and not at all mentioned in the Becket studies cited here so far. It is a song, a so-called monophonic conduct, written in Latin, a complaint over the exile of Thomas the archbishop. Thomas was canonized by pope Alexander III on February 21, 1173. After this date an office for St Thomas for the feast of December 29 was composed. Almost all the preserved musical items written for St. Thomas have had their original place within this office or at the later translation feast which was instituted when St. Thomas's remains were placed in a new magnificent shrine in the cathedral of Canterbury on 7. July 1220. But the unique *In Rama sonat...* preserved only in the manuscript Guelferbytanus, Helmstedt 628 (on fol.168^{v}) of the Herzog-August-Bibliothek, the so-called W_1, does not belong to any of these celebrations. It was written during Thomas's exile as the text refers to his 'living in the Egypt of France', 'Egiptum colit Gallie'.[19]

Even though Thomas Becket's name is not specifically mentioned in the text, there can be no doubt about the references of the metaphors of the text and the episcopal staff with its characteristic crook placed in the left margin of the manuscript where the lament over the exiled 'first-born' of the English Church begins; Becket was the first Norman archbishop of Canterbury who was actually an Englishman.[20] I quote the song in the transcription of John Stevens and his translation:

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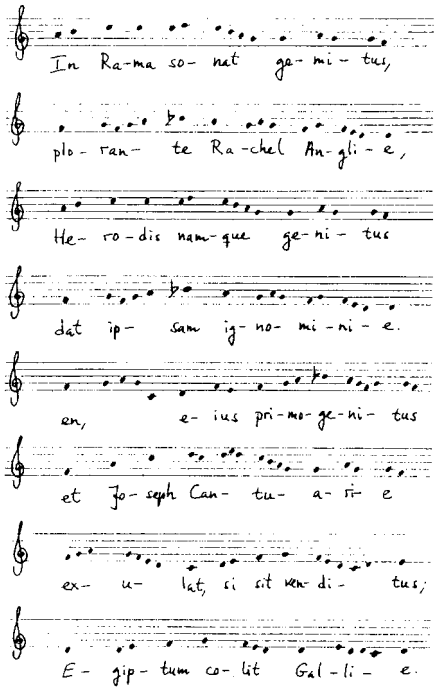
[19] Facsimile, translation and comment in Denis Stevens, 'Music in Honor of St. Thomas of Canterbury', *The Musical Quarterly*, 56 (1970), 316–19, transcription and English paraphrase in *Music in Honour of St. Thomas of Canterbury*, ed. by Denis Stevens, Alexander Blachly, Joan Long, and Cornelia Weininger (London: Novello, 1970), pp. 1 and 48, transcription and translation in John Stevens (1986), p. 69.

[20] Denis Stevens (1970), pp. 317–19.



In Rama sounds a voice of weeping,
as England's Rachel mourns,
for Herod's offspring
gives her over to ignominy.
Behold her firstborn,
her 'Joseph' of Canterbury,
lives in exile as if sold [into slavery];
he inhabits the 'Egypt' of France.[21]

This song surely would not have pleased Henry II – described as a descendant of King Herod – had he known of it. But neither would it have pleased the remaining ecclesiastical leaders of the Church in England who indirectly – through the use of the biblical image of Joseph sold to Egypt – in the song seem to be described as the treacherous 'brothers' of the exiled. The bishops on the whole, of course, had not given Thomas much support against the King.

What seems to be the most natural assumption is that the song was written by someone belonging to the group, for whose rights Thomas was fighting: the minor clerks of the Church. Among these there would also have been many students well-enough educated that one can imagine one of them as the poet/composer.

This is the point of departure for my opera. I chose a name, John of Norwich, as the composer of the song, and in order to avoid a one-sided picture of the complex conflict I characterized him as a supporter of Thomas who gradually sees how the conflict takes on proportions far exceeding the original discussions over the legal rights of minor clerks.

[21] John Stevens (1986), p. 69.

Strictly speaking, the text of the song does not add much to what we know already. It tells us that Thomas did have supporters in England who deplored his exile.[22] With all due reservations concerning the interpretation of a distant musical source about which we do not know anything for sure, it seems natural to assume that it does constitute an authentic voice different from the official and legal discussions, but also from the glorifications which were the result of the martyrdom and Thomas's canonization. Of course, we have no guarantee that the song could not be a commission from Thomas in order to promote his case in England. But the song does indeed seem free of any kind of positive propaganda about Thomas and his cause. In fact, it does not comment on anything but the exile itself. The fact that it does not seem to be referred to in the large numbers of documents preserved in this case only makes it more likely that it was not written at the initiative of any of the parties.

Most importantly for my dramatic interest, this 'authentic' voice put into the voice of a modern, anachronistic figure gave me the opportunity to move between the historical basis for the opera and the modern appropriation thereof. John of Norwich is the person who carries out the mentioned reflective passage at the same time as he is a contemporary observer, gradually more and more detached from the events. As a modern person he is too far away to be able to understand, as a contemporary he is too powerless and only gradually comes to realize that he does not understand what is going on.

All the figures in the opera are seen through John of Norwich's eyes. He transcends any realism in belonging to the 12th century as well as to our time, a postulate not accounted for, but crucial to the dramatic construct.

5. *A Vigil for Thomas Becket*

In the introductory part of the opera the transition from a modern celebratory performance situation where the performers only gradually take on their medieval roles is carried out using both a modern hymn text in my own setting and texts and music from the medieval New Year's office, the so-called 'Feast of Fools' as it is most

[22] Denis Stevens (1970), p. 316, proposes that the song was prompted by Henry's banishing of Becket's relatives and confiscation of their property in 1164 immediately after having failed to obtain the removal of Thomas from the see of Canterbury at the papal court in Sens to where Thomas had gone for support when he fled from England. Pope Alexander III spent the years from 1159 to 65 in exile in Sens because of his conflict with the German emperor.

well-known from Beauvais and Sens[23] and a spoken narrative text. In the latter the 'modern' John of Norwich gives necessary information about the background of the conflict and it is at the same time used to enable him to gradually move back to his 'proper' time – the point where John of Norwich is left behind in England when Thomas went into exile in France. Just before the orchestral overture John sings his lament about the exiled archbishop to the modern audience. After the overture the drama is set in the monastery of Christ Church, Canterbury (the cathedral) where John apparently has just sung his lament to the prior and the subprior is creating the discussion which follows.

The royal custodian of the archbishopric during the exile – an old enemy of Thomas – breaks in to arrest John, but prior Wibert prevents this. It all makes John think further about the conflict, to begin with mainly concerning his own role, but gradually also taking into account the more general theme of power conflicts. Here the opera moves from history and narrative to a modern reflection on the age-old problem of the theodicé. Musically John's monologue combines twelf-tone rows harmonized as if they were a tonal chorale (which of course is not possible, thus creating a musical absurdity) with modern atonal outbursts and more or less pastiche-like tunes. He finds his meditative – almost celebratory – conclusion in words (directed to God) by the earlier archbishop of Canterbury, the great theologian Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109). They are taken from chapter VII of Anselm's *Proslogion* (c. 1100), and given in the following (slightly contracted) form in the English libretto: 'But how are you almighty, if you cannot tell lies and make truth untrue, done undone? Should capability of such things not speak of strength, but of helplessness?'[24]

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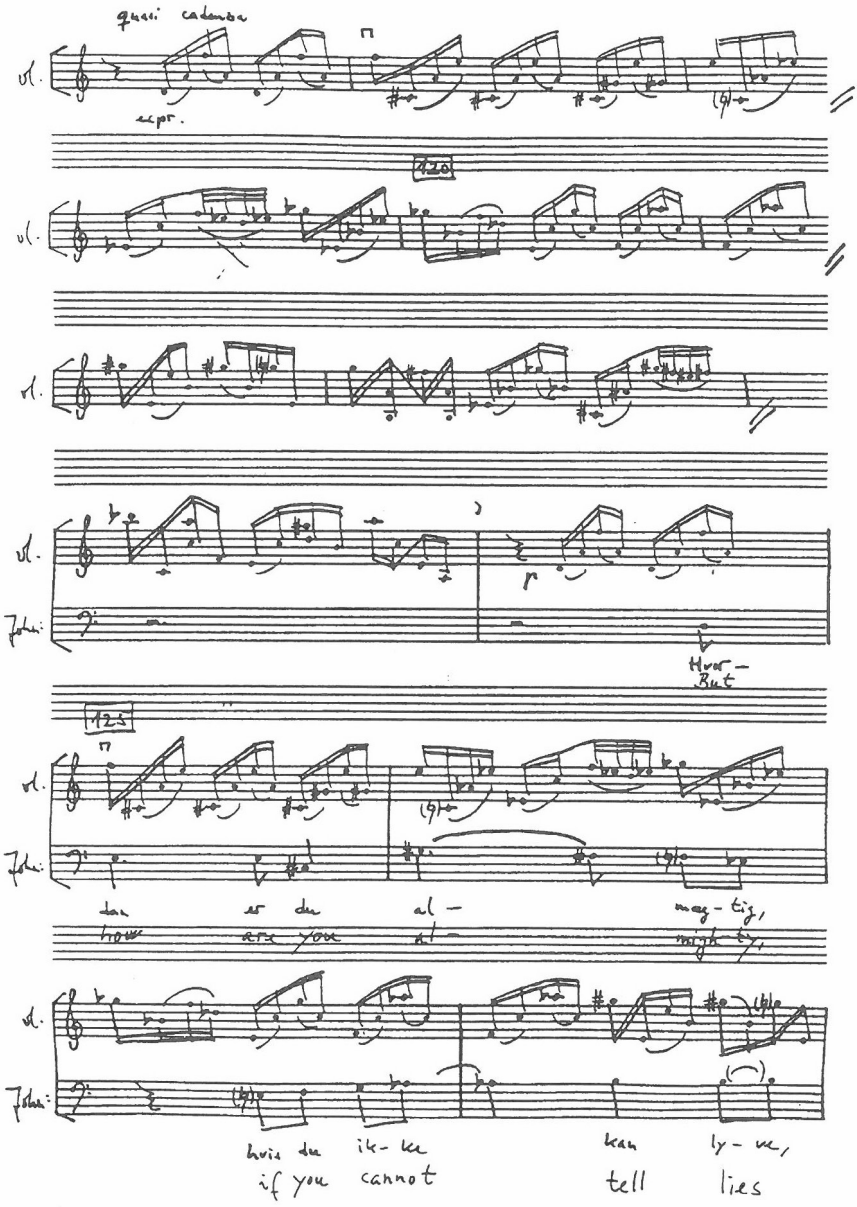
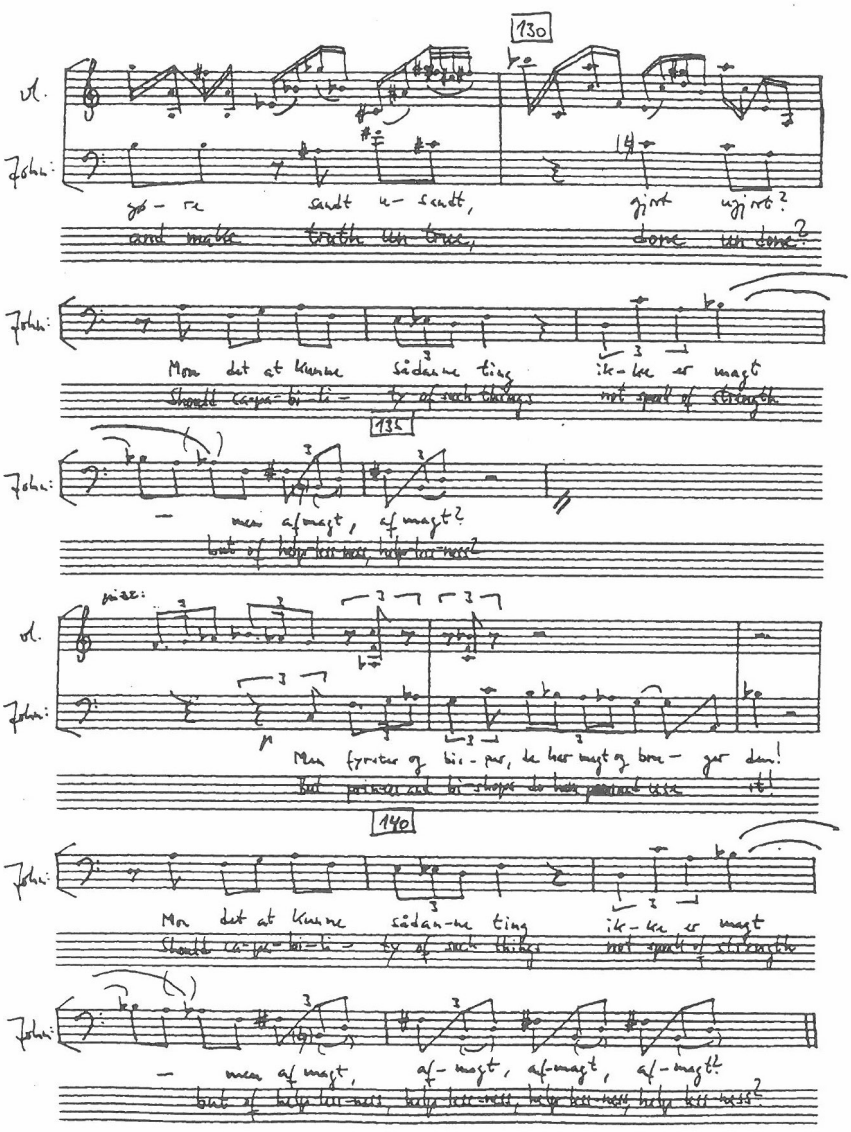
[23] The two famous offices are found edited and commented in: *Office de Pierre de Corbeil (Office de la Circoncision) improprement appelé 'Office des Fous'*, ed. by Henri Villetard (Paris: Alphonse Picard et fils, 1907), and Wulf Arlt, *Ein Festoffizium des Mittelalters aus Beauvais in seiner liturgischen und musikalischen Bedeutung*, 2 vols (Köln: Volk, 1970).

[24] I have used a published Danish translation: Regin Prenter, *Guds virkelighed* (Fredericia: Lohse, 1982), pp. 28–29, for the original version of the libretto. The English translation of the libretto (by Kristin Rygg and myself, corrected by Frances Hopenwasser) had to be fitted into the musical text requiring a number of language compromises. The Latin text is as follows: 'Sed et omnipotens quomodo es, si omnia non potes? Aut si non potes corrumpi nec mentiri nec facere verum esse falsum, ut quod factum est non esse factum, et plura similiter: quomodo potes omnia? An hæc posse non est potentia, sed impotentia?' Anselmus Cantuariensis, *Proslogion* in *S. Anselmi Cantuariensis archiepiscopi opera omnia*, vol. I, ed. by Franciscus Salesius Schmitt (Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann, 1968), p. 105.

Here follows part of the musical text forming the conclusion of act one, a duetto between a solo violin and John of Norwich:





In the second Act I chose a relatively insignificant episode during the exile as a key to the character of the conflict. On 18 November 1169, Henry II and Thomas negotiated peace, at Montmartre – at the time just outside of Paris. An attempt in January of the same year at Montmirail – the first since Thomas had left England – had only led to a strengthening of the conflict. This time the two parties actually managed to reach an agreement, basically by avoiding all the concrete

divergencies except for the terms of a peace. But the King refused to give the kiss of peace to Thomas which he in turn required. This seemingly ridiculous end of a long day's fruitful move towards a realistic agreement is, of course, just one out of a number of strange reactions from the two protagonists during the long conflict.

I wanted to use this episode in order to present how far away from a rational, political behaviour even the king had come. In fact, the episode – according to historical accounts – shows a parallel between the two camps which I wanted to stress. The first scene of act two shows Henry on his way back from the mentioned negotiations together with Louis VII (of France) meeting the French Queen Adela de Blois-Champagne.[25] I have interpolated a reaction on her part into the historically known facts: 'King Henry, I was an admirer of yours, but now I'm totally confused! Come to your senses and make peace with Becket!' This prompts the king to defend himself in words of anger and self-pity: '[...] Thomas has hurt his country and also his king unspeakably. In anger I promised that Thomas never should get the kiss of peace. Never! [...].'

Similarly, it is known that a number of Thomas's learned clerks went to speak with him during the night after the failed peace conference. They were exasperated over the long exile and the fruitless stubbornness on both sides. Frank Barlow believes that John of Salisbury, the famous scholar and the dove among Thomas's advisors, could well have led the protesting party.[26] This is what he does in the second scene of act two. But when it comes to the archbishop's reply – this is in fact the only time Thomas appears in the music drama – I have tried to incorporate what he reportedly said about the necessity of suffering along the path of truth and justice[27] into a reply which is certainly anachronistic. This presents my 20th-century reading of Thomas of Canterbury, and I would never expect anybody to take it as a historical truth. The same, of course, holds true for the music drama as a whole, but I do think that it is never as clearly exposed as here – John of Norwich being an invented figure, simultaneously modern and medieval.

> Thomas is depicted with a viewpoint far more relativistic than any historical account could allow. In this way I could create a continuity between the worldly Thomas and the archbishop. At the same time his eagerness and stubbornness is explained as a kind of role-playing. This should not be misunderstood as a denunciation of Thomas's honesty. On

[25] Barlow (1986), p. 194.
[26] Barlow (1986), p. 195.
[27] Barlow (1986), p. 195.

the contrary, it is my reading of the events and of Thomas's personality that precisely the role playing is absolutely serious for him:

> Henry does not see himself. Is that so very strange? Secrets of my own soul are closed to me. Still. I was Henry's friend – you know – a worldly man and I loved it so. I have always been so fond of my roles! Archbishop and all! At first I did decline. Henry kept insisting. I knew too well what this might cost us. We must fully take our roles upon ourselves. This is what I do! You must think that I'm mad! This night is silently strange. I know there is truth. That we know. But surely it is not of this world. At this stage we see in a mirror. And with faith, hope, and charity.
>
> I must act out my roles as best I can. It is truthful to do so. The sole and only truthfulness I can handle. God forgive me if I do not have enough love in my play of roles! One should never play roles that one can't cherish! Legal rights of the minor clerics! Canterbury's right. My rights. Is it right what I'm fighting for? I hardly know! But I know that it is right that I'm fighting for those things! That I do love what I'm fighting for.
>
> Still, this life is more than all our roles! That will be our tragedy! There'll be peace soon. ['][28]

We shall never know any truth about this since (as it has already been stated) Thomas of London – as he was born, or Thomas of Canterbury, as he became known, but in his own time only Thomas Becket in derision of his humble descend[29] – is too far removed from us. My reading may hopefully provoke and thus help us re-read the medieval events in a new light. And it may hopefully bring forward some relevant thoughts from the medieval story for us to ponder about. That is what John of Norwich does in his reaction to Thomas's reply – with the qualification: 'Was this what he really said – or have I just imagined it?'[30] All the figures of the drama – it must be remembered – are seen through the memory or the imagination of John of Norwich.

In the postlude we only hear about the murder of Thomas and are confronted with three different reactions. John of Norwich presents the final celebrational idea of the opera, the idea of the all-embracing

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[28] It must be remembered that this is all sung in a recitative-like style which is an integral part of the message, the music had to be left out for reasons of space. Again I want to note (cf. n. 24 above) that the English translation had to be fitted into the already composed music.

[29] Barlow (1986), p. 12.

[30] Here again the thoughts of Anselm from *Proslogion* are taken up – and combined with a biblical text (Mark 10. 42–45), the important although quasi-ironic statement of Jesus about leadership: '[...] whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. For the Son of Man came not to be served [...]'.

openness of the liturgical space where there is room for both Thomas and Henry (and anyone) regardless of differences and enmities. The presentation of this thought leads into the singing of the troped apostolic creed[31] as it was sung during the New Year's celebration in Sens, the so-called Feast of Fools, on which I have drawn for a number of liturgical items used in my music drama. This feast of the circumcision (a week after Jesus' birth) was known under many names, also *festa asinaria* (the feast of the donkey). It was one of the clerical feasts, belonging (this day) to the subdeacons, the lowest of the clerical orders, not even always considered to be a holy order at the time.[32] Thomas Becket fought for the rights of the minor clerics such as John of Norwich and thus it seems appropriate to end the opera with a glimpse of the feast as celebrated in Sens – where the archbishop could well have attended it during his exile.

The austere Gregorian Church did know of role playing and of both liturgical and other ways of promoting individual clerical groups and politico-religious demands. Such matters would at times – as in the case of the Feast of Fools – be done with inventiveness and playfulness as well as seriousness, as Arlt and Fassler have demonstrated.[33]

After the creed from the New Year's office, where I have *troped* some of the tropes by setting them – in my own style – for four voices, follows a clarinet solo as the participants leave the *stage* of the church in procession.

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[31] Villetard, ed. (1907), pp. 140–41. Tropes are most easily – and in this case sufficiently – defined as interspersed comments to the individual sentences of the creed (or whatever type of text is being troped) in both music and words (some tropes – but not in the case referred to here – may consist of either words or music). For a general introduction to the very widely used practice in the liturgy of the early and high Middle Ages see Hiley (1993), pp. 196–238.

[32] See the historical introduction in Arlt (1970), Darstellungsband, pp. 38–51.

[33] Arlt (1970), Darstellungsband, pp. 55–64, interprets the Feast of Fools through the so-called Donkey's conduct in a reading that (partly) identifies the donkey with the subdeacons. See also the vivid descriptions of the reformed Feast of Fools in Fassler (1992), pp. 68–80. The two here mentioned preserved full offices for this feast are such reformed offices from the early 13th century.

'CLEANSING' THE DISCIPLINE: ERNST ROBERT CURTIUS AND HIS MEDIEVALIST TURN

RICHARD UTZ

1. Curtius decanonized?[1]

IN 1985, WALTER HAUG, a powerful influence on German medieval studies in the last 25 years, began his magisterial synthesis of medieval literary theory in vernacular texts with the following statement:

> Medieval studies, especially in Germany, had some difficulty in assimilating the work of Ernst Robert Curtius. His work, which placed medieval literature in the wider context of the classical cultural tradition after the débâcle of 1945, opened up new perspectives and directions for medieval studies which were to prove difficult to resist. At the same time, this wider European perspective presented a challenge to medievalists which was, ultimately, bound to encounter resistance in the form of a defence of the specific characteristics of the Romance and Germanic literatures of the Middle Ages.[2]

Haug's book, more interested in the dialectics of historical development than in reaffirming the theories of cultural continuity so dear to medievalists in the 1940s and 1950s, implicitly questioned the kind of medieval philology practiced and institutionalized by Curtius's famous *Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter* (1948). Where Curtius established what he regarded as an unbroken chain of literary *topoi* from classical poetic and rhetorical theory onward into the middle ages and modernity, Haug challenged the

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[1] Some of the ideas for this essay were first presented in my plenary address for the Twelfth International Conference on Medievalism, at Canterbury Christ Church College, England, in August 1997. I would like to acknowledge the helpful suggestions made by Kathleen Verduin (Hope College) and Joerg O. Fichte (University of Tübingen) on draft versions of this essay.

[2] *Literaturtheorie im deutschen Mittelalter. Von den Anfängen bis zum Ende des 13. Jahrhunderts. Eine Einführung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985); I am quoting from the excellent English translation, *Vernacular Literary Theory in the Middle Ages. The German Tradition, 800–1300, In Its European Context*, trans. by Joanna M. Catling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 1.

apparent weaknesses of narrowly defined philological *topos* investigations and focused on what he calls the 'masking effects', those means by which medieval poets were capable of expressing highly individualized and situation-specific messages 'under the disguise of conventional topoi' (p. 12). He collected the material for his historical poetics of the medieval narrative from representative literary authors' own theoretical statements which are usually woven into the outwardly formulaic fabric of their programmatic prologues (and epilogues) and demonstrated convincingly how even long lists of rhetorical *topoi* are to be seen as more than the constant elements of tradition, rather variables which may be used 'both in a traditional and in an individual manner' (p. 12). Because Haug's study presented such an appealing methodological alternative to positivistic philology and flamboyant postmodernism alike, it was hailed as the voice which finally addressed the unresolved hermeneutical questions in the leading twentieth-century studies on this topic.[3] One reviewer even maintained that Haug had brought about the 'emancipation of the "German Middle Ages" from the "Latin Middle Ages"'.[4]

While one can well understand and share these scholars' enthusiasm about Haug's fine book, it is doubtful that it has had (or will have) any decisive influence on the academic reception of Curtius and the methodology which informs *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*. Indeed, the list of other well-established medievalists who have critiqued Curtius's position in the area of *topos* research is long. None of them, however, nor a whole host of scholars pointing an accusing finger at Curtius's political views have so far been able to challenge the Curtius mystique:[5] His book has become a standard work which is present in every single university or college library, is commonly referred to by the affectionate nickname, *ELLMA*, and has

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[3] See, e.g., Hans-Jörg Spitz's review in *Arbitrium*, 6 (1988), 20–22 (22).

[4] See Ernst S. Dick's review in *Speculum*, 63 (1988), 679–81 (681).

[5] For exemplary critical voices on Curtius's *topos* research, see Helmut Beumann, 'Topos und Gedankenfuge bei Einhard', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 33 (1951), 337–50, Hugo Kuhn, 'Zum neuen Bild vom Mittelalter', *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift*, 24 (1950), 530–44, Peter Jehn, 'Ernst Robert Curtius: Toposforschung als Restauration', *Toposforschung: Eine Dokumentation*, ed. by Peter Jehn (Frankfurt: Athenäum, 1972), ppvii-lxiv; Lothar Bornscheuer, *Topik. Zur Struktur der gesellschaftlichen Einbildungskraft* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1976), pp. 138–78, and Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale* (Paris: du Seuil, 1972), pp. 51–53. For Curtius's political leanings, see Michael Nerlich, 'Sur les différences nationales dans la capacité de deuil: à propos de Ernst Robert Curtius et Paul de Man', and Hans Manfred Block, 'Zu Ernst Robert Curtius' Ort im politisch-intellektuellen Leben der Weimarer Republik', both in *Lendemains*, 59 (1990), 5–15 and 16–62 respectively.

recently gone through a seventh edition in its English translation.[6] Indeed, Curtius remains the most famous name in medieval literary studies, and not only in Germany, where he was decorated, as early as 1952, with one of the highest existing distinctions, the order *Pour le Mérite*: He received an honorary doctorate from the University of Glasgow (1951) and, as the first German scholar after 1933, was awarded an honorary doctorate from the Sorbonne (1954); most American doctoral dissertations in the field pay at least lip-service to his monograph or use it as a quarry to explicate specific literary *topoi*; and finally, Curtius remains the only nineteenth- or twentieth-century medievalist whose critical reception has necessitated the publication of an entire research bibliography of almost 200 pages, a full-scale biography of well over 200 pages, and hundreds of articles on specific problems.[7]

The following reasons have been advanced to account for the extraordinary success of Curtius's book:

1) Curtius's work at the university of Bonn made it possible for him to connect to Bonn's particular *genius loci*, i.e., to a famous faculty including an active and prestigious tradition of scholarship in Classical philology.[8]

2) Curtius wrote his study as the result of more than 35 years of experience as a teacher and scholar. The epic dimensions of his book, its learnedness as well as its philological exactitude – most of the data Curtius had gathered and catalogued during his years of inner

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[6] *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages*, trans. by Willard R. Trask (New York: Bollingen Foundation; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953; 7th edn (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990)). References in this essay will be to *Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter*, 2nd edn (Berne and Munich: Francke, 1967).

[7] See Earl Jeffrey Richards, *Modernism, Medievalism and Humanism: A Research Bibliography on the Reception of the Works of Ernst Robert Curtius*, Beihefte Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie, 196 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1983), and Heinrich Lausberg (a student of Curtius's), *Ernst Robert Curtius (1886–1956)*, ed. and introd. by Arnold Arens (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1993). In March 1998, the MLA International Bibliography listed more than 50 essay publications on Curtius since 1983.

[8] Cf. Stefan Goldmann, 'Zur Herkunft des Topos-Begriffs von Ernst Robert Curtius', *Euphorion*, 90 (1996), 134–49; Goldmann shows specific links with the scholarship of the Bonn professors Hermann Usener and Franz Bücheler and that of their students. It should also be noted that the fascination for philology and the digging for *topoi* may in part be due to the influence of Curtius's grandfather, Ernst Curtius (1814-96), a famous historian and archaeologist, who held highest academic appointments in Classical Philology (Göttingen) and Archaeology (Berlin). See the entry in vol. II of *Deutsche Biographische Enzyklopädie*, ed. by Walther Killy (Munich: Saur, 1995).

emigration (c. 1935–45) – was apt to impress even those colleagues otherwise critical of his methodology.
3) Reviewers and readers interested in the general cultural and political message of Curtius's study received it overwhelmingly positively because it represented the *Zeitgeist* of the post-war period like no other academic publication. If many critics from the 1960s on tended to see only its close ties with the older philological tradition, scholars like Erich Köhler acknowledged the novelty of a study which attempted to end the formerly dominant nationally-minded research paradigms.[9]
4) In the eyes of many medievalists Curtius transformed German positivistic philology, which evolved together with the country's belated unification as a modern nation state and was cherished and institutionalized as a national virtue at which German scholars outshone the scholars of any other country. His specific kind of transformation, because it applied this originally national(istic) methodology to a transnational goal, a 'timeless European mythology',[10] brought about an attractive *translatio studii* immediately welcomed by German professors and students alike. Harald Weinrich's reaction is representative:

> I reacted in that 1948 post-war situation not only as a young student but also as a young German who saw in this beautiful tradition and fantastic continuity between Western Literature and the Latin Middle Ages the unsuspected chance to be all at once reintegrated, together with my nation, into the good old family of civilized and cultivated mankind.[11]

Most medievalists outside of Germany, many of whom continued to value and believe in the thoroughness and (seemingly) non-ideological character of German philological research despite the war, greeted Curtius's monograph with similar enthusiasm.[12]
5) His (undeserved) reputation as an intellectual resistance fighter may have further advanced the level of acceptance among the first

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[9] 'Einheit europäischer Literatur', *Aufklärung*, 1.7 (1951), 177–78.
[10] Curtius, *Kritische Essays zur Literatur*, 3rd edn (Bern and Munich: Francke, 1963), p. 143.
[11] '"Deutscher Geist", European Literature, "Medium Ævum Latinum": Thirty Years After Ernst Robert Curtius' Book "Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter"', *Romance Review*, 69 (1978), 261–78 (p. 262).
[12] On the subject of German medieval philology and its Anglo-American reception see my 'Resistance to (The New) Medievalism? Comparative Deliberations on (National) Philology, *Mediävalismus*, and *Mittelalter-Rezeption* in Germany and North America', *The Future of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Problems, Trends, and Opportunities in Research*, ed. by Roger Dahood, Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), pp. 151–70 (pp. 157–59).

generation of readers. Current German scholarship is leading a bitter and divisive debate about Curtius's political opinions; medievalists outside of Germany have remained largely uninfluenced by this debate.[13]

6) Today, Curtius's fame rests securely upon the positive reception of the 1940s and 1950s, and the book is still being cited far and wide. While it has lost the driving force as a post-war supersignifier, it has now taken on an almost mythical reputation as the final philological word on literary *topoi* in medieval studies or, as Hajio J. Westra has said, 'a convenient standby', in particular for scholars outside the realm of literary studies.[14] Thus, even an alternative as solid and well-argued as Walter Haug's will do little to decanonize the book or its author.

If the causes for the study's initial appeal and ongoing influence are clear, the beginnings of Curtius's concatenation of Classical Antiquity with the European Middle Ages deserve more attention, especially with regard of the semantic history of the term 'medievalism'.

2. Curtius coins 'Mediaevalismus'

Although it is certainly a simplification to claim that Curtius did not produce anything 'substantial' ('nichts Wesentliches') in the area of medieval studies prior to 1938,[15] it is correct that before the publication of *ELLMA* he was primarily famous for his publications on major modern and contemporary French, English, and Spanish authors, e.g., his *Habilitationsschrift* on Ferdinand Brunetière (published 1914), *Die literarischen Wegbereiter des neuen Frankreichs* (1919), his books on Maurice Barrès (1921) and Balzac (1923), *Französischer Geist im neuen Europa* (1925), the short monograph on *James Joyce und sein Ulysses* (1929), and *Die französische Kultur*

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[13] Cf. Richards, p. 14. Carl Landauer, 'Ernst Robert Curtius and the Topos of the Literary Critic', *Medievalism and the Modernist Temper*, ed. by R. Howard Bloch and Stephen G. Nichols (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 334–54, has recently introduced a larger Anglo-American readership to the discussion.

[14] Westra's remark is quoted from his review of *Ernst Robert Curtius: Werk, Wirkung, Zukunftsperspektiven. Heidelberger Symposium zum hundertsten Geburtstag 1986*, ed. by Walter Berschin and Arnold Rothe (1989), in *Comparative Literature*, 19 (1992), 642–45.

[15] Michael Nerlich, 'Umberto Eco, E. R. Curtius, H. H. Glunz, oder noch ein Anfang, den wir verpaßt haben', *Cahiers d'Histoire des Littératures Romanes/Romanistische Zeitschrift für Literaturgeschichte*, 18 (1994), 44–70 (p. 51); on p. 68, Nerlich even calls Curtius a 'Mittelalter-Neophyt'.

(1930). However, his doctoral dissertation, defended at Strassburg University in 1910 (published 1911), was devoted to a medieval text, the Old French *Quatre Livre des Reis*, and a large number of his university seminars and lectures had medieval topics.[16]

The first time Curtius published anything approaching a programmatic statement about the Middle Ages was in 1932, not in a scholarly text, but in his long political essay, *Deutscher Geist in Gefahr* (The German Spirit in Danger).[17] The title already indicates the alarmist nature of this text with which Curtius attempted to do his share towards reestablishing the traditional humanist values in his country and its educational and academic institutions. He saw Germany equally under siege from the socialist left and the nationalist right and sided in his book with the conservative (Christian) Center Party. In addition to the Communists and Social Democrats, former Heidelberg colleague Karl Mannheim and his 'sociologism' ('Soziologismus') became the scapegoat on the left political spectrum, and Curtius revealed anti-Semitic sentiments by his pseudo-biologistic linking of the genesis of Mannheim's theses to his being an apostate Jew.[18] Curtius's main target, however, was the growing nationalism on the extreme political right. Here, he attacked the ultra-nationalist intellectuals in the so-called 'Tat-circle' ('Tat-Kreis') who were promoting what he considered a dangerous cultural nihilism.

If the study of contemporary literature was increasingly

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[16] Cf. Richards, pp. 2–4. This perceived lack of publications in medieval philology was the reason for controversy during his nomination for the chair at Bonn University in 1929. See also Hans Reiss, 'Ernst Robert Curtius (1886–1956): Some Reflections on the Occasion of the Fortieth Anniversary of his Death', *MLR*, 91 (1996), 647–54 (p. 650).

[17] *Deutscher Geist in Gefahr* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1932; repr. 1983).

[18] See *Deutscher Geist in Gefahr*, p. 86: 'The interconnection of Jewish culture in Germany with socialist or marxist or "submarxist" sociological theories is [...] in itself an important sociological factor' ('Die Verflechtung des deutschen Judentums mit sozialistischen oder marxistischen oder "submarxistischen" Gesellschaftslehren ist [...] selbst ein soziologischer Tatbestand von erheblicher Bedeutung.'), and p. 85: where he claims that most Jews were 'sworn to [...] scepticism and destruction' ('der Skepsis und der Destruktion zugeschworen'). On the history of Curtius's various attacks on Mannheim see Joseph Jurt, 'Seinsgebundenheit des Denkens oder Kontinuität des Zeitlosen', *Archiv*, 234 (1997), 55–65, a review essay on Dirk Hoege's *Kontroverse am Abgrund: Ernst Robert Curtius und Karl Mannheim. Intellektuelle und 'freischwebende Intelligenz' in der Weimarer Republik* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1994), and Christine Jaqueran, 'Curtius et Karl Mannheim. L'homme de Lettres et le Sociologue', *Ernst Robert Curtius et l'idée d'Europe. Actes du colloque de Mulhouse et Thann des 29, 30, et 31 janvier 1992*, ed. by Jeanne Bem and André Guyeaux (Paris: Champion, 1995), pp. 231-37.

appropriated by nationalist (or leftist) colleagues, Curtius undoubtedly felt that the early literatures still presented areas and periods through which his own conservative, Christian, and Pan-European vision might be propagated. Unlike many of his fellow medievalists, he did not choose what Ulrich Wyss has called the 'Germanic perspective', a research agenda in which scholars sought to claim, e.g., Carolingian/Frankish texts as documents of German (national) linguistic history or which elevated Siegfried as the universal German hero. For his purposes, he forged a union of the 'Christian perspective' which, for Protestant and Catholic scholars alike, centered on the attractive idea of an omnipresent system of religious belief, and the 'Roman perspective', perhaps first propagated by Hugo von Hoffmannsthal's vague yearning to go back somewhere behind the beginnings of a hateful modernity as represented by the Renaissance and the Reformation.[19] Like his close friend T. S. Eliot, who defined himself as a Classicist in literature, a royalist in politics, an Anglo-Catholic in religion, and who deemed his 'classicism' best represented in the medieval mind of Dante, Curtius expressed his corresponding cultural program in what he terms 'mediaevalism and a restorative spirit' ('Mediaevalismus und Restaurationsgesinnung'), a promised land he situated with the 'illustrious fathers of the Occident from Augustine to Dante' ('die erlauchten Gründer unseres Abendlandes von Augustinus bis Dante').[20]

As the spelling of 'Medi*ae*valismus' suggests, Curtius gleaned the term from a British text and adapted it to an idiosyncratic meaning. When he proposed what he called a 're-encounter with the Middle Ages' ('Wiederbegegnung mit dem Mittelalter', p. 31), he prescribed in fact a radical reorientation away from contemporary and medieval France and toward the one country in Europe in which 'the idea of Rome has lived through a Renaissance since the victory of Fascism' ('seit dem Siege des Faschismus die Romidee eine Renaissance erlebt hat', p. 49), i.e., Mussolini's Italy. Curtius held that 'the so-called Enlightenment' ('sogenannten Aufklärung', p. 108) had ushered in a downward movement in the history of intellectual thought and that Germany's belated and therefore all the more pathological nationalism had accelerated this deterioration. His strong desire to find

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[19] For Wyss's distinctions, see his 'Mediävistik als Krisenerfahrung', *Die Deutschen und ihr Mittelalter. Themen und Funktionen moderner Geschichtsbilder vom Mittelalter*, ed. by Gerd Althoff (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1992), pp. 127–46 (pp. 131–36).

[20] *Deutscher Geist in Gefahr*, p. 19 (my translations). On the parallels and differences between Curtius's and Eliot's views, see Claus Uhlig, 'Tradition in Curtius and Eliot', *Comparative Literature*, 42.3 (1990), 193–207.

roots in the pre-downward (i.e., pre-modern) Middle Ages made him forget that such restorative fascination included the acceptance of the fact that the Roman *fasces* were now carried around at the mass meetings of Italy's Fascist leaders. If his general views about the incompatibility of nationalism and culture informed the outer frame of his thoughts, many details of his supposed alternative to nationalism coincided tragically with the German national socialism which was about to take over the country when Curtius's book appeared.

Curtius's neologism of 'Mediaevalismus', coined to describe his evolving plans to provide comprehensive academic proof for his political theories, did not survive the mixed reception of *Deutscher Geist in Gefahr*. While Curtius abandoned the term (and with it all overt political activity) soon after 1932, he continued to investigate the premises laid out in his book as purely academic and philological methodology.[21]

3. Curtius Censor, cleansing the discipline

Many medievalists cognizant of *Deutscher Geist in Gefahr* tend to regard it as the manifesto announcing Curtius's turn toward the Latin Middle Ages and *topos* research. Others, like Peter Dronke, believe that Curtius's doctoral dissertation (1911) as well as his concise monograph on Joyce's *Ulysses* (1929) should be regarded as the decisive texts signalling the evolution of those mental paradigms which would come to dominate *ELLMA*.[22] However early one would like to

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[21] 'Mediävalismus' never made it into any German dictionaries and has, until recently been known almost exclusively to Curtius scholars. See, however, the entries 'Mediävalismus', 'Medievalism' (by Heinz Bergner), and 'Mittelalterrezeption' (by Bernd Steinbauer) in Peter Dinzelbacher's *Sachwörterbuch der Mediävistik* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1992). The first entry makes no mention of Curtius, has no text of its own, and only refers to the two others which are described as basically synonymous. On the differences between the two terms and their national traditions, see my 'Resistance to (The New) Medievalism', pp. 168–70. 'Mediävalismus' has been taken up by Wyss's essay and Fritz Wagner's review of the essay collection in which Wyss's piece appeared (Die *Deutschen und ihr Mittelalter*), in *Mitteilungsblatt des Mediävistenverbandes*, 11.2 (1994), 39–42. Both literary scholars' spelling of 'Mediävalismus' completes the linguistic assimilation of the British term begun by Curtius.

[22] 'Curtius as Medievalist and Modernist', *TLS*, 3 October 1980, 1103–06. However, see Heinz Jürgen Wolf, 'Ernst Robert Curtius und "Li Quatre livre des reis"', *'In Ihnen begegnet sich das Abendland.' Bonner Vorträge zur Erinnerung an Ernst Robert Curtius*, ed. by Wolf-Dieter Lange (Bonn: Bouvier, 1990), pp. 169-79 (p. 179): 'Man kennt Curtius's intensive Beschäftigung mit dem Mittelalter in späterer Zeit. Der Gegenstand seiner Dissertation scheint dabei kein Thema gewesen zu sein.'

situate the origins of *ELLMA*, these theories have overlooked the missing link which conjoins his texts of 1932 with his *magnum opus* of 1948.

On page 385 of *ELLMA*, in a seemingly unimportant aside of his 'Epilog', Curtius denounced a certain Hans H. Glunz (mentioned in footnote 3) as the representative of a 'haphazardly working "history of ideas"' ('leichtfertig konstruierenden "Geistesgeschichte"') and as one of those scholars responsible for the deplorable 'decadence in academic research' ('des wissenschaftlichen Verfalls') he himself was trying to mend. This was not the first critical remark Curtius had made about Glunz. In 1938, he dedicated a long 'review' essay of 199 (!) pages to the annihilation of Glunz's *Die Literarästhetik des lateinischen Mittelalters*, and published it in the renowned *Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie*.[23]

Hans Herman Glunz was an Anglicist with a solid academic record: he had studied English, German, and French languages and literatures at Frankfurt and Munich; in 1928 he received a Dr. phil. with a dissertation on *Die lateinische Vorlage der westsächsischen Evangelienversion* from Munich University; in 1932 he earned a PhD from Cambridge University with a dissertation on the *History of the Vulgate in England from Alcuin to Roger Bacon* (published with Cambridge University Press); also in 1932, as an assistant professor at Cologne university, he successfully completed his *Habilitation* (*Divinae Litterae - Textliche und literarische Geschichte der Vulgata des Hochmittelalters auf englischem Boden*); only two years later, he received the call as *Ordinarius* of English literature at Frankfurt University; in addition to his work on the history of the Vulgate and his 600-page *Literarästhetik*, he also published a study of the subjunctive in Old English literature as well as monographs on Early Modern topics: *Shakespeare und Morus*, *Shakespeares Staat*, and *Der 'Hamlet' Shakespeares*.[24]

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[23] *ZfRPh*, 58 (1938), 1–50, 129–232, 433–79; the three long sections are entitled 'Zur Literarästhetik des Mittelalters' (I–III). Glunz's study has the subtitle, *Wolfram - Rosenroman - Chaucer - Dante*, Das Abendland, Forschungen zur Geschichte europäischen Geisteslebens, 2 (Bochum-Langendreer: Pöppinghaus, 1937; 2nd edn, Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1963).

[24] *Die lateinische Vorlage der westsächsischen Evangelienversion*, Beiträge zur englischen Philologie, 9 (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1928; repr. London and New York: Johnson, 1967); *Die Verwendung des Konjunktivs im Altenglischen*, Beiträge zur englischen Philologie, 11 (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1929; repr. London and New York: Johnson, 1967); *Britannien und Bibeltext: der Vulgatatext der Evangelien in seinem Verhältnis zur irisch-angelsächsischen Kultur des Frühmittelalters*, Kölner anglistische Arbeiten, 12 (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1930; repr. London and New York: Johnson, 1966; *The History of the Vulgate in England: From Alcuin to Roger Bacon*,

Based on his research on the history and influence of the Vulgate in the Middle Ages, Glunz had an ambitious intention with his *Literarästhetik*: He wanted to investigate the significance of poetry in medieval art; to illuminate the goals medieval authors had when writing fictional texts; and to describe the gradual development of the medieval poet-*artifex* to the modern poet-*creator*.[25]

> In Part I, entitled *Auctores* (pp. 11–97) Glunz traces the changes in the interpretation of the function of art. According to Glunz it was Alcuin who first liberated the arts from their position as mere mediators between man and the Bible, and who claimed independent value for them [...]. The attitude towards the rôle of artistic creation is then examined as he finds it expressed in the aims of the new Latin literature around 800, in the chivalrous literature of Germany and in the poetry of the minstrel and the cleric. There is also brief commentary on England in the twelfth century.
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> In Part II, *Deus Poeta* (pp. 101–97), Glunz discusses the position of the Bible in the Middle Ages as a work of art. Augustinian exegetical method, he says, proceeded from the assumption that the Bible possessed a symbolic structure. In order to ascertain its meaning Augustinian exegesis enlisted the assistance of the *artes*. The differing assessments of the Vulgate as a creation of God the artist are then followed, as Glunz sees them exemplified in the changing mode of Biblical exegesis and in the commentary upon it, from the time of Charlemagne onwards.
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> Part III, *Ars Rhetorica* (pp. 201–363), is devoted partly to an account of the function of the poet as held in the Middle Ages, and partly to a description of the meanings found in art at that period. There is comment on medieval rhetoric in relation to legal language and the sermon, and on

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Being an inquiry into the text of some English manuscripts of the Vulgate Gospels (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933); *Shakespeare und Morus*, Kölner anglistische Arbeiten, 32 (Bochum-Langendreer: Pöppinghaus, 1938; repr. London and New York: Johnson, 1966); *Shakespeares Staat*, Frankfurter wissenschaftliche Beiträge. Kulturwissenschaftliche Reihe, 3 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1940); *Der 'Hamlet' Shakespeares*, Wissen und Gegenwart, 13 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1940). Among Glunz's academic teachers were Max Förster (Munich), F. C. Burkitt (Cambridge), and Heinrich Schöffler (Cologne). For more bio-bibliographic information see Gunta Haenicke and Thomas Finkenstaedt's *Anglistenlexikon, 1825–1990*, Augsburger I & I Schriften, 64 (Augsburg: Universität Augsburg, 1992), p. 112.

[25] Cf. Glunz, p. viii: 'Welchen Rang die Dichtung in der Wertwelt mittelalterlicher Kunstepochen einnahm, was mittelalterliche Schriftsteller in den einzelnen Zeiträumen mit dem Abfassen von Werken fiktiven Inhaltes in Prosa oder in lyrischen und epischen Versen bezweckten, welche Rolle solchen Werken in der Gesamtheit menschlichen Schaffens und Strebens nach damaliger Anschauung zukam, wie der mittelalterliche Schriftsteller, in dem zeitweise nur ein Handwerker begriffen zu sein schien, sich zum modernen Dichter, dem Schöpfer entwickelte, kurz, wie das Ethos des mittelalterlichen Dichters sich bildete und wandelte.'

rhetorical practice and the homily in England. Glunz then outlines the varying attitudes toward poetry as he infers them from the works of Wolfram, Gottfried, Orrm, Guillaume de Lorris, Chaucer and others.

Part IV, *Poiesis* (pp. 367–567), is concerned with the medieval sources of post-medieval poetry. In order to bring these to light Glunz examines the theory of Beauty in the twelfth century and after. He then investigates the development of poetry in Italy commenting extensively on the Dolce Stil Nuovo. Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio and also on *Pearl* and *Piers Plowman*. The emancipation of the poet's ego is seen as one of the major changes in the evolution of literature beyond the Middle Ages.[26]

While most reviewers of *Literarästhetik*, even those who seriously critiqued Glunz's study, praised it as an example of 'universal learnedness', 'careful analysis', 'extraordinary research' (Metz), 'wide scholarship, historical perspective, and critical acumen' (Davis), and regarded his approach as 'a great achievement' (Hittmair), 'fully justified', and 'convincing' (Praz), E. R. Curtius did not have a single positive remark to make.[27] In addition to much justified criticism of a number of individual points, both the length and the tone of his review indicate that Curtius had more in mind than the destruction of one single example of research. In fact, he underlined that his essay served the 'necessary cleansing of the discipline' ('der gebotenen Bereinigung des Arbeitsfeldes dienend', p. 433) and had to be written in a 'more extensive' ('ausführlicher') and 'polemical form' ('polemischer Form', p. 2) because he wanted to correct Glunz's errors by presenting the results of his own recent studies. Curtius stressed the fact that Glunz was an Anglicist, implying that someone from outside the realm of romance literature had dared tread upon Romania territory, the heartland of Curtius's own critical efforts (pp. 1, 129–31).[28] The result of such Anglicist hubris is:

- 'misleading' ('irreführend', p. 11; 'Irreführung', p. 27),
- 'deviant' ('abwegig', pp. 11, 23),

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[26] The synopsis is taken from Marianne Wynn's review of the 1963 reprint of *Literarästhetik*, *MLR*, 59 (1964), 152–53 (p. 153).

[27] See Rudolph Metz, *Anglia Beiblatt*, 48 (1937), 290–97 (p. 292: 'Das Ganze stellt ein Werk von umfassender gelehrter Bildung dar, mit weitem Überblick über das ganze Gebiet mittelalterlicher Dichtkunst, wobei echter Forschersinn und ungeheurer Gelehrtenfleiß sich glücklich gepaart und eine wissenschaftliche Leistung von hohem Rang zustande gebracht haben.' See further: B. E. C. Davis, *Medium Ævum*, 7 (1938), 151–52; Rudolf Hittmair, *Englische Studien*, 73 (1938), 72–83; Mario Praz, *English Studies*, 21 (1939), 166–69. For Dorothy Everett's review of Glunz's few pages dealing with Chaucer, see *YWES* ,18 (1937), 70–71.

[28] Curtius's reaction is similarly territorial when he catches another Anglicist, Elsa Berndt (*Dame Nature in der englischen Literatur bis herab zu Shakespeare*, 1923), amateurishly meddling with medieval Latin or Classical literature, see p. 180, note 3).

- 'incorrect' ('nicht richtig'; 'verfehlt', p. 42),
- 'entirely incorrect' ('völlig falsches', p. 26),
- 'not thorough' ('nicht sorgfältig', p. 45),
- 'non-sensical' ('unsinnig', p. 26).

Glunz's text is said to contain:

- 'terminological inconsistencies' ('terminologische Unklarheiten', p. 10),
- a 'web of errors' ('Gewebe von Irrtümern', p. 23),
- 'forced' ('gepreßt', p. 23) etymological meanings,
- 'tendentious mistranslations' ('ein elementarer Lapsus [...] auf Kosten der Tendenz zu setzen', p. 24),
- 'misinterpretations' or 'misreadings' ('Die Interpretation is verfehlt', p. 29; 'Fehldeutung', pp. 38, 40; 'Fehldeutungen', p. 42),
- 'astonishing errors' ('erstaunliches Abirren', p. 33),
- 'aberrations/peculiarities' ('Absonderlichkeiten', p. 40),
- 'indefensible constructions' ('unhaltbare Konstruktion', p. 42),
- 'abstruse readings' ('abstruse Deutung', p. 39).

The study is characterized by:

- 'instability/brittleness' ('Brüchigkeit', p. 37),
- a 'questionable' ('fragwürdig', p. 39) 'Dantology' ('Dantologie', p. 39),
- 'mutilated' ('verstümmelt', p. 41) citations,
- 'violent distortions' ('gewaltsame Verdrehungen', p. 39),
- the 'suppressing', ('unterschlägt', p. 41), 'forgetting' ('vergißt', p. 40), and 'silent leaving out' ('übergeht [...] mit Stillschweigen', p. 36) of information,
- the 'fraudulent substitution' ('unterschoben', p. 32) of meanings,
- the presentation of a confusing 'nubes testium' (p. 34),
- and a 'lack of proof' ('Belege für diese Interpretation bringt Glunz nicht', p. 37).

The causes for the numerous 'errors' ('Irrtum!', p. 35), the 'phantom' ('Phantom', p. 26), 'will o' the wisps' ('Irrlicht', p. 26), and 'inventions' ('herausgesponnen', p. 25), Curtius located in Glunz's:

- 'superficial knowledge' ('recht oberflächliche Kenntnis', p. 29; 'nicht unterrichtet', p. 33),
- general 'lack of the indispensable philological, historical, and philosophical education' ('es dem Verfasser an der unerläßlichen philologischen, historischen und philosophischen Schulung gebricht', p. 42; 'unzureichendes philologisches Können', p. 42),
- 'uncritical and violently constructing methodology' ('unkritische und gewalttätig konstruierende Arbeitsweise', p. 33; 'verfehlte wissenschaftliche Methodik', p. 42),
- and the 'a priori-constructing of theses on the basis of preconceived opinions' ('aprioristisches Konstruieren auf Grund vorgefaßter Meinungen', p. 42).

All in all, Glunz was accused of having 'simplified' and 'raped' in an 'entirely unacceptable manner' ('in einer ganz ungebührlichen Weise vereinfacht und vergewaltigt', p. 11) the historical substance of medieval poetry.[29]

How did *Literarästhetik* come to deserve such a vicious and ad hominem tirade? Why, unlike the other competent reviewers, did the paragon of philology employ such demeaning and insulting discourse? The answer is to be found in the diametrically opposed research methodologies favored by the two scholars. Glunz had attempted to stress the alterity of medieval aesthetics from Classical models, postulated the medieval period as a unity detached from earlier or later periods, and even made specific critical remarks against the traditional *Toposforschung* because – in his opinion – it tended to produce anachronistic readings:

> The research for the origins and the influence of a motif or a poetic way of writing can encourage seeing everything in every period and to blur the characteristic differences of the times. The thought of humanity's rebirth out of the spirit which the Italian quattrocento thinks to confirm, appears in late antiquity, early Christianity, the Church Fathers, the twelfth century, mysticism, the early sixteenth century; indeed, there is scarcely a century leading up to the Renaissance in which it could not be found. However, one should not deduce the essential similarity of the motif from its ubiquity, believing that the application and judgment of the unchangeable original motif had been only slightly modified. This is a misunderstanding which – in its partiality – overlooks that the same term must not always yield the same semantic information. Language as well as formulated thought and entire works may lend themselves to different intentions in order to be appropriated or to be entirely transformed by them and lose their original meanings in favor of new ones. The literary history which oriented after sources, plots, and motifs has used especially the plots, perceptions of art, and terminology of Classical antiquity still influencing the Middle Ages as evidence that the medieval period had mainly nourished itself from Classical materials and forms and was only a slight modification of antiquity until antiquity appears again more clearly in the Renaissance. [...] It would be a fallacy to infer from this that Classical ideas have changed little in the Middle Ages or the early Renaissance, that Classical mentalities live on, etc.

[29] To understand the extent of Curtius's incrimination of Glunz, it should be noted that several of the critic's words imply embezzlement and fraudulence ('unterschlagen' and 'unterschoben') while others – especially when repeated over and over – shed a questioning light on his colleague's sanity ('herausgesponnen', 'Abirren', 'Irrlicht', 'Absonderlichkeit').

> [Die Forschung nach der Herkunft und dem Fortwirken eines Motivs oder einer poetischen Darstellungsweise kann dazu verleiten, in jeder Periode alles zu sehen und die charakteristischen Unterschiede der Zeiten zu verwischen. Der Gedanke der Wiedergeburt der Menschheit aus dem Geiste, den man im italienischen 14. Jahrhundert festzustellen glaubt, begegnet im Altertum, im Frühchristentum, in der Patristik, im 12. Jahrhundert, in der Mystik, im frühen 16. Jahrhundert, ja es ist kaum ein Jahrhundert bis zur Renaissance hin, in dem er nicht zu finden wäre. Aus dem Überallsein des Motivs aber die wesentliche Gleichheit der Zeiten zu folgern, wobei sich nur die Verwendung und die Beurteilung des unveränderlichen Grundmotivs etwas gewandelt hätte, ist ein Mißverständniß, das in seiner Befangenheit im Stoffe übersieht, daß der gleiche Ruf nicht immer das Gleiche zu bedeuten braucht. Die Sprache wie formulierte Gedanken und ganze Werke können sich anderen Absichten darbieten, um von diesen übernommen, aber völlig umgewandelt zu werden und ihre ursprüngliche Meinung zugunsten einer neuen zu verlieren. Die quellen-, stoff- und motivforschende Literaturgeschichte hat besonders die durch die mittelalterlichen Jahrhunderte fortwirkenden Stoffe, Kunstanschauungen und Namen der klassischen Antike zum Beweis dafür herangezogen, daß die mittelalterliche Zeit sich in der literarischen Kunst häuptsächlich von antikem Stoff und antiker Form genährt habe und nur eine leichte Modifikation der Antike bedeute, worauf die Antike in der Renaissance wieder klarer zum Vorschein komme. [...] Daraus zu schließen, daß sich im Mittelalter oder in der Frührenaissance gegenüber dem Altertum wenig geändert hat, daß antike Anschauungen fortleben und dergleichen, wäre ein Trugschluß.][30]

In the beginning of his study, Glunz had even been more outspoken:

> Especially for the medieval period there is still the danger of introducing confusion and prejudice into literary studies by misdirected philological investigations of isolated facets of historical documents. Even philology should not research into the dark, but should let itself be guided by the right insight into the historical ramifications in which the texts are rooted.
>
> [Gerade auf mittelalterlichem Gebiete besteht immer noch die Gefahr, daß durch falsch gerichtete philologische Untersuchungen einzelner Seiten der Denkmäler Verwirrung und Vorurteile in die Literaturwissenschaft hineingetragen werden. Auch Philologie sollte nichte ins Dunkle hinein untersuchen, sondern sich ihre Richtung von richtiger Einsicht in die historischen Zusammenhänge bestimmen lassen, denen die Texte verhaftet sind.][31]

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[30] *Literarästhetik*, p. 570–71.
[31] *Literarästhetik*, p. ix.

Statements like this one make it clear that Glunz, writing from a pre-World War II vantage point, regarded positivism, philology, and *Toposforschung* as the old, outdated tradition which needed to be overcome, an opionion shared – even after the war – by Leo Spitzer, Erich Auerbach, and many others.[32] In fact, his proposed methodology implied and foreshadowed in various ways the theories of *Mittelalter-Rezeption*, (new) historicism, and semiotics critics would apply to literary texts from the 1960s on. Umberto Eco, e.g., while respectful of Curtius's broad philological knowledge displayed in the 'gran libro', looked extensively toward Glunz's study which he esteemed as the pioneering example of a socio-historical approach to medieval aesthetics and which he used as an elementary vademecum for his doctoral dissertation, *Il problema estetico in Tommaso d'Aquino* (1970).[33] Another scholar quoted *Literarästhetik* as the study which opened medievalists' eyes to the sign-character of medieval poetry and which was the first to demonstrate the potential as well as the limitations of poetic autonomy in the Middle Ages.[34]

With very few exceptions, however, Curtius's strategy of scholarly 'cleansing' succeeded and relegated *Literarästhetik* to the realm of the *studia non grata*. Those reviewers who read Curtius's essay before writing their own, were invariably swayed by his reputation, the force of his polemical conviction, and the seemingly overwhelming evidence he put forward. Marianne Wynn, e.g., who admitted to being influenced by Curtius's long list of *monenda* for her task of evaluating the 1963 reprint of Glunz's book, felt 'perversely' (i.e., because her impression contradicted Curtius's verdict?) that 'it would be unjust to say that it ought not to have been reprinted. It is an attempt to solve a number of important questions which persistently nag the critic of medieval literature. As an attempt it stands, has never been superseded entirely, and scholars will consult it until it is.'[35] To Innsbruck Anglicist Karl Hammerle the words, metaphors, and tone of Curtius's review became so 'indispensable' ('unentbehrlich') that they resurfaced in and more or less framed his entire critical text.[36]

Hammerle's zealous emulation of Curtius's review celebrated the romance scholar for having 'razed the rotten' ('reißt Morsches nieder'), i.e., Glunz's theses, on the first 50 pages of his essay in order to 'create free ground for reconstruction' ('freien Grund für den

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[32] See the reviews listed by Jehn, p. vii, n. 7.

[33] See Nerlich, 'Umberto Eco', 44–49, 62–63.

[34] Thomas Cramer, '"Solus creator est Deus". Der Autor auf dem Weg zum Schöpfertum', *Daphnis*, 15 (1986), 261–376 (p. 266).

[35] *MLR*, 59 (1964), 152.

[36] See Hammerle's review of *Literarästhetik* in *Archiv*, 94 (1939), 85–92 (p. 91).

Neuaufbau zu schaffen'; this is Hammerle's rendering of Curtius's 'necessary cleansing of the discipline'), on the remaining 149 pages.[37] Indeed, as Curtius was sure he had silenced the Anglicist upstart (and with him all those even only implicitly critical of his own methodology) in the first part of his essay, he was now at leisure to unveil to his readership the anatomy of what would become his *magnum opus* ten years later. Thus, it is his Censor-like destruction of *Literarästhetik* in 1938 that provided him with the opportunity to make his own medievalist turn, to go public with much of the information he had been diligently collecting. The bulk of his medieval research begins in 1938 and moves – through about 20 essays – directly toward the book which brought him lasting fame in Medieval and Early Modern studies.

A comparison shows that all three parts of the 1938 'trilogy' contain passages which will reappear in *ELLMA* almost verbatim.[38] More importantly, the early pieces already include his theories on *Toposforschung* and the biologistic genesis of medieval literature which scholars of the post-1945 period would so willingly accept and applaud. Already in *Deutscher Geist in Gefahr* Curtius had rejected theories of autonomy or reception to describe the relation between the Middle Ages and Antiquity. For him the Classical world had remained omnipresent and largely unchanged 'at all times and in all sites of our Western history' ('in allen Zeitabschnitten und auf allen Schauplätzen unserer abendländischen Geschichte', p. 104). In the 'review' essay, he expanded this picture by describing the organic *translatio* of forms, plots, and *topoi* which lead through an 'incubational period' ('Inkubationszeit', p. 129) and the 'germinating' ('entkeimen') of the romance language and literatures in late Antiquity – when the 'Church and Gemanic culture already have become part of the Roman Empire' ('Kirche und Germanentum schon in und mit dem Imperium leben') – to the (still) Latin medieval culture. Romance Philology, in his eyes, had to find its most inalienable and promising task in 'enlightening the historical genesis of historical growth which leads from Classical Rome to the Middle Ages' ('Aufhellung des geschichtlichen Werdens, das vom antiken Rom zum Mittelalter führt', p. 130). The Merovingian and Carolingian *translationes* and *renovationes* link the Germanic world with the universal 'Romanität', a development which finds its most impressive flowering in the Renaissance of the twelfth century but is still palpable in the

[37] Hammerle, 91.

[38] Somewhat unphilologically, Curtius gives only general reference to his essays as sources in his 'Bibliographische Anmerkungen', pp. 565–66.

seventeenth century Baroque.[39] *Topoi* and *loci communes*, the 'impersonal stylistic forms' ('unpersönlichen Stilelementen', p. 139) which connect with the longer-lasting, subconscious layers of human historical experience, serve as secure signposts which assist the philologist in providing proof for these structural continuities. That the preconceived definition of this cultural goal is at least as 'aprioristisch' (p. 42) as the one Curtius had accused Glunz of, never occurred to him.[40] Like other professed philologists, he was convinced that his methodology was purely positivistic and would yield scientific categories ('Ordnungsschemata') deduced from empirical research. *Toposforschung*, he claimed, did not present an external system applied to the historical texts ('keine von außen herangetragene Systematik', p. 139). Rather, *topoi* would 'snuggle close to' ('anschmiegen') the historical substance simply because they were part of it. *Topoi* were never ideological; they – and with them Curtius – were always on the side of truth. Any scholar who dared disagree was engaging in 'the periodically recurring heresy to believe in an epistemological level which is superior to the historical-philological one' ('den periodisch wiederkehrenden Irrglauben an eine höhere Erkenntnisform, die der historisch-philologischen überlegen sein soll', p. 42):

> Seen from the perspective of *Toposforschung*, the wide landscape of Medieval literature gains a new illumination. All things separated reallign into new unities; beams of light fall on dark spots; overlooked features resurface and new lines become visible. And if, according to Amiel, landscape is an *état d'âme*, then with the illumination of this literary landscape our mental relationship to it must change. [...] One can understand a medieval text [...] only if one has investigated if it stands in the tradition of a topos. Whoever does not observe this rule, can arrive at incorrect results of [...] considerable consequence.
>
> [Die weite Landschaft der ma. Literatur gewinnt in der Perspektive der Topik eine neue Beleuchtung. Getrenntes schließt sich zu neuen

[39] About Curtius's 'Romania' as a context for research in comparative literature, see Peter Brooks's 'Romania and the Widening Gyre', *PMLA*, 87 (1972), 7–11.

[40] On the 'a priori' claims implicit in *Toposforschung*, see Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, trans. by Robert M. Wallace (Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 1983), p. 114: '"*Topos* research" belongs to the tradition of assuming eidetic preformations, which begins with the ancient theories of the elements, atoms, Ideas, and forms and continues through the "innate ideas" to dream symbolism, archetypes, and "structures." Each time we try to resist the excessive multiplicity of a historicism of mutually incomparable facts, our history threatens to contract into the simplicity of something that is always the same, as though all that mattered was never to allow understanding to satisfy itself.'

> Ganzheiten zusammen; auf dunkle Bildstellen fallen Lichter; übersehene Züge treten hervor und neue Linien zeichnen sich ab. Und wenn eine Landschaft nach Amiels Wort ein *état d'âme* ist, so muß sich mit der Beleuchtung jener Literaturlandschaft auch unser seelisches Verhalten zu ihr wandeln. [...] Man kann einen ma. Text [...] nur dann verstehen, wenn man untersucht hat, ob er in der Tradition eines Topos steht. Wer das nicht beachtet, kann zu Fehlschlüssen von [...] erheblicher Tragweite gelangen.] (p. 140)

Such totalizing statements elicited critique even from scholars who were practitioners and defenders of *Toposforschung* themselves. R. Menéndez Pidal, in one of the very few direct responses to Curtius's 'review' essay, underlined the general methodological value of his colleague's text. He warned, however, that Curtius had left little room for 'la parte inventiva' in medieval poetry.[41]

More importantly, Curtius's peculiarly unscientific rhetoric reveals that his philological postulates were an authorizing pose, that the principles which guided the selection of the linguistic and cultural phenomena and analogies inevitably depended on the preferences and predilections of the selecting individual. As much as he wanted to camouflage this lack of an objective frame by having *topoi* 'snuggle close to' texts or by employing romantic metaphors of suddenly 'illuminated' dark spots in scholarship, his 'Ordnungsschemata' as well as their evaluation had the investigating scholar as their only constant and authenticating referent. Curtius's strategy is similar to that of the second generation of Renaissance philologists who instrumentalized the appearance of Egyptian hieroglyphs after 1419 in their Oedipal struggle to overcome Dante, Petrarca, and Boccaccio. Marsilio Ficino, e.g., believed to have found in the pictorial hieroglyphs a form of direct *significatio* which would help solve the fundamental problems of conventional language by avoiding the obvious gap between signifier and signified. In the semiotic immediacy of the hieroglyphs (which resembled God's immediate and unmediated knowledge of individual things), Ficino discovered a scholarly tool which raised his own methodology to a level above and beyond that of his predecessors.[42] Curtius forged the *topos* as his tool to outshine all others. His feeling of superiority, as Peter Jehn has demonstrated in a detailed analysis, was based on a 'synthesis of instinct and philology', a combination of positivistic collecting and

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[41] 'La epica española y la "Literarästhetik des Mittelalters" de E. R. Curtius', *ZfRPh*, 59 (1939), 1–9 (p. 1).

[42] On this Renaissance 'war of signs', see Martin Burckhardt, *Metamorphosen von Raum und Zeit. Eine Geschichte der Wahrnehmung* (Frankfurt and New York: Campus, 1997), pp. 132–35.

cataloguing with Curtius's own learned subjective affinities.[43] The direct connection of *topoi* with the secularized philological God, the TEXT, and the selection of *topoi* by the God-like, genial scholar were sufficient justification for the medievalist manifesto he published in 1938.[44]

4. Epilogue

The area of Curtius studies is one of the most contested sites of academic medievalism because it involves each individual scholar's views on the place and responsibility of tenured intellectuals within society. In Curtius's case, former students and admirers tend to praise his interdisciplinarity, his versatility in medieval as well as modern literatures, his heroic and humanist commitment to building a bridge between nations, and his philological thoroughness[45] while critics assail his formalism, restorative conservatism, cultural elitism, anti-Semitism and philological inner emigration.[46] This essay, which intended to locate the historical moment and interrogate the circumstances of Curtius's medievalist turn, adds one facet to a still evolving picture. Here the results are clear: *Deutscher Geist in Gefahr*, but even more so the 199-page 'review' essay on *Literarästhetik* reveal a critic who would use his idiosyncratic cultural theories (and his formidable card catalogue) to lash out against and demonize scholars who followed different paths of thinking.[47] The vicious and unscholarly invective

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[43] Jehn, p. vx-xvi.

[44] Curtius shares with Toynbee the idea of cultural elitism and obviously believes to be among the elect few in his own society who are creative by nature (as opposed to the uncreative masses). See Jehn's excellent section on 'Eliteideologie und Schöpfertum', pp. xxvi–xxx.

[45] Cf., e.g., the recent re-evaluation by Reiss, or William Calin's forthcoming essay 'Ernst Robert Curtius: The Achievement of a Humanist', *Medievalism and the Academy*, ed. by Leslie J. Workman, Kathleen Verduin, and David D. Metzger, *Studies in Medievalism*, IX (1997) (I am indebted to the editors for an advance copy).

[46] See, e.g., Nerlich, 'Umberto Eco', and 'Sur des différences nationales dans la capacité de deuil: à propos de Ernst Robert Curtius et Paul de Man', *Lendemains*, 59 (1990), 5–15; Hans Manfred Bock, 'Die Politik des "Unpolitischen". Zu Ernst Robert Curtius' Ort im politisch-intellektuellen Leben der Weimarer Republik', *Lendemains*, 59 (1990), 16–62.

[47] In 1947, Curtius wrote a short but similarly vitriolic review of Franz Walter Müller's *Der Rosenroman und der lateinische Averroismus des 13. Jahrhunderts* for *Romanische Forschungen*, 60 (1947), 598–99. Here, again, he threatened that anyone who left the territory of philological Toposforschung would necessarily 'fall prey to grave errors' ('verfällt man in grobe Irrtümer', p. 599). All Müller is interested in,

against Hans H. Glunz was an attempt at censoring and silencing a promising new perspective in European Medieval studies. If, as Curtius threatened, a medievalist should dare choose methodologies other than *Toposforschung* to investigate medieval texts, 'incorrect results of considerable consequence' (p. 140) would be the inevitable punishment. As the reception history of Glunz's book demonstrates, the consequences in this case were truly far-reaching: Glunz's academic reputation was severely damaged; from 1938 on, he turned his attention to exclusively Anglistic topics, especially Shakespeare; and while Curtius's circle of friends and colleagues gloated over the Anglicist's demise by referring to the 'review' essay in their correspondence as 'Glunziade',[48] Glunz was considered 'abkömmlich' (i.e., 'not vital' for the reduced programs at Frankfurt University), was drafted into the army in 1940, and died on the Eastern Front on 3 March, 1944. But even after Glunz's death Curtius would not abstain from a final, vindictive attack against the man he had styled as his scapegoat ten years earlier: In *ELLMA* he mentioned Glunz as the one scholar who exemplified the miserable 'failure' ('Versager', p. 385) of that streak of post-World War I literary criticism which attempted a futile and 'haphazard' ('leichtfertig') charge against an ultimately victorious Lady Philology.

Habent sua fata libelli: In 1988, Hans-Jörg Spitz wrote that Walter Haug's *Literaturtheorie im deutschen Mittelalter* had finally and successfully solved the hermeneutical desiderata in the scholarship of '*E. R. Curtius*, E. Auerbach, *H. H. Glunz*, J. Schwietering, B. Boesch, H. Kuhn' (my italics) and others.[49] Thus, from the historical distance of more than forty years, the two scholars' books are now seen as efforts toward a common goal. One, triumphantly and known to every medievalist in the world; the other one almost annihilated and known only to those who practice academic medievalism and, thus, critically investigate the process by which their subject evolved.

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Curtius claims, is 'ideological research and sociologism' ('Ideologieforschung und Soziologismus'). In fact, Müller had dared to quote Curtius's arch enemy, Karl Mannheim, ('whom he accepts as authority'; 'der für ihn Autorität ist'), but did not include reference to Curtius 'Doktorvater', Gustav Gröber.

[48] See Nerlich, 'Umberto Eco', p. 64.

[49] See Spitz's review in *Arbitrium*, 6 (1988), 20–22 (p. 22).

THE POLITICAL USE OF CHAUCER IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY AMERICA

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THIS WILL SEEM AN odd subject. The last serious use of Shakespeare, let alone Chaucer, that I can think of in American political discourse is Senator Edward Kennedy's quotation from *Romeo and Juliet* in his eulogy for his dead brother Robert at the 1968 Democratic National Convention. But educational institutions have an essential political function, as argued most notably by Louis Althusser;[2] and in America, at least, Chaucer is still something of an educational staple. At my own institution, for example, a public university enrolling some 16,000 undergraduates, he has a prominent place in a course that hundreds of students use annually to meet liberal-arts requirements. Increasingly, students arrive at college having already read one or more of the *Canterbury Tales* in secondary-school courses. One can say something about the political use of Chaucer at the present time, then, if one assumes the political function of education.

Every mode of production, including capitalism under its new name of 'a market economy', not only produces; it reproduces. It reproduces the forces of production, so far as machines are replaced by machines that other machines have made and so far as we as employees are fed and housed in order to return to work next day. The mode of production also reproduces the *relations* of production. That is, in the struggle over the surplus product, a surplus is extracted from the direct producers by different means within capitalism than within other productive modes. Capitalist relations of production are distinguished by the worker's controlling none of the productive

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[1] It is a special pleasure to pay tribute to Leslie Workman. Because I was teaching in Oxford, Ohio, when he established *Studies in Medievalism*, I was a first-hand witness to the tenacity and resourcefulness with which he focused international attention on defining medievalism and investigating its avatars. With his wide learning, an urbane irony, and always an unpretentious willingness to set his hand to any necessary task, Leslie organized meetings and published a journal without any of the usual academic perquisites and support. So far as medievalism exists today as a subject of academic inquiry in its own right, his has been the seminal effort.

[2] See 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)', in *'Lenin and Philosophy' and Other Essays*, trans. by Ben Brewster (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1971), pp. 127–86.

forces except her or his own labor. In Chaucer's England, by contrast, where some 90% of all wealth was produced on the farm,[3] the direct producer – the husbandman or plowman – was typically in effective control of the productive means (some thirty acres, typically), on which he had customary rights as a tenant. The change from feudalism to capitalism, then, was a change in the *relations* of production. It is these that the social formation must reproduce, no less than its plant or the biological vitality of its workers. They are reproduced within capitalism by law, of course, by force, but also by 'the educational ideological apparatus', dominant within capitalism as the Church was within feudalism.

The political use to which Chaucer is presently put within the last years of high school and in the colleges and universities of America is not necessarily insignificant. There, in Althusser's language, a 'portion of scholastically adapted youth carries on [...], until it falls by the wayside and fills the posts of small and middle technicians, white-collar workers, small and middle executives, petty bourgeois of all kinds. A last portion reaches the summit, either to fall into intellectual semi-employment, or to provide [...] the agents of exploitation (capitalists, managers) [...] and the professional ideologists [...].'[4] Like any text, Chaucer's can have a political use in the schools only to the extent that Althusser describes schoolwork correctly: 'it is by an apprenticeship in a variety of know-how wrapped up in the massive inculcation of the ideology of the ruling class that the *relations of production* in a capitalist social formation [...] are largely reproduced. An essential bourgeois idea, of course, is that this inculcation does not happen at all, since the school is represented as a neutral environment purged of ideology.'[5]

To get a sense of the political use of Chaucer in the schools at the present moment, I want to turn to two recent books by prominent scholars – Lee Patterson's *Chaucer and the Subject of History* and David Wallace's *Chaucerian Polity*. But I also want to refer sporadically to a book from the first quarter of the century, G. L. Kittredge's *Chaucer and His Poetry*, and another comprising essays written in mid-century, E. T. Donaldson's *Speaking of Chaucer*.[6] Over

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[3] See M. M. Postan, 'The Economic Foundations of Medieval Society' (1951), in his *Essays on Medieval Agriculture and General Problems of the Medieval Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 22.

[4] Althusser, p. 155.

[5] Althusser, p. 156.

[6] Kittredge, *Chaucer and His Poetry* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925); Donaldson, *Speaking of Chaucer* (New York: Norton, 1972); Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991); and

the first three quarters of this century, Kittredge and Donaldson were immensely influential, of course, on the collegiate study of Chaucer in America. Because, with the supersession of New Criticism, this study has become highly variegated, no single critic, it seems likely, will be thought in the future to have dominated the last quarter century with anything like the prestige of Donaldson in the 60s. Nonetheless, the powerful 'turn to history' since the 70s and the new historicisms have been operated within Chaucer criticism not least by Patterson and Wallace. At the end of his large volume, Patterson affirms that he has 'tried to think socially about Chaucer' (p. 424). That Wallace tries to do so also is clear from the very title of his book.[7] As undergraduate classes, which include among the future workers named by Althusser those who will teach in the public schools, take the 'turn to history' that graduate seminars in Chaucer have taken already, Patterson's and Wallace's books surely represent the reproductive force of Chaucer for the foreseeable future. And there may be some use in assessing this.

Patterson's and Wallace's books are both quite overwhelming, manifestly the products of conscientious research and a vast erudition. In the space of a few pages in a book of more than 400, Patterson, for example, cites widely from medieval French and Spanish sources on chivalry, gives select bibliography on heraldry in late fourteenth-century England, and reports results from his study of some 300 depositions in the Scrope-Grosvenor trial over the right to bear a particular coat of arms. In these same few pages, he also offers an informed account of Richard II's northern campaign in 1385 and of the conflict between merchants and magnates about prosecution of the war with France. He does all this for the critical purpose of taking up contradictions within chivalry and pointing out the crucial significance of Chaucer's own deposition in the Scrope-Grosvenor controversy. All this within a small fraction of the book.

Wallace, for a long while now, has had no peer among Anglo-American scholars in his understanding of Chaucer's relations with Italy. His book demonstrates a knowledge of English culture from Edward III through Elizabeth I, gained in part from painstaking

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Wallace, *Chaucerian Polity: Absolutist Lineages and Associational Forms in England and Italy* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997).

[7] The focus of other important American books on Chaucer in the the last decade has either not been on the ecopolitical – I think here of Marshall Leicester's *The Disenchanted Self* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990) – or has taken that up chiefly in relation to patriarchy and the oppression of women. See, for example, Carolyn Dinshaw's *Chaucer's Sexual Poetics* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989) and Elaine Tuttle Hansen's *Chaucer and the Fictions of Gender* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992).

archival research, for example in the letter-books of the City of London. More importantly, for many readers of Chaucer, his book will be a first introduction into the significance of the differences between Chaucer's two trips to Italy – to Florence in 1372–73 and then Lombardy in 1378. 'In visiting Florence and Lombardy, Wallace writes, 'Chaucer was exposed to the most crucial material and ideological conflict of the Italian Trecento: the conflict between republican *libertas* [in Florence] and dynastic despotism [in Lombardy]' (p. 1). Wallace describes the complex executive and legislative machinery of Florence intended to ensure that 'no single family, professional, or civic group could achieve a permanent monopoly of power'. He describes, moreover, the relations between this polity and the *brigata* (or 'company') imagined within Boccaccio's *Decameron*. Also in ample detail, he traces Petrarch's management of his career within the orbit of the Lombard tyrants, the Viscontis. Within Chaucerian fiction, then, in Wallace's view, the Clerk's Tale – the story of patient Griselda – may be taken to represent the vertical axis of Milanese or Lombard despotism, while the formation of the *felaweshipe* of pilgrims in the General Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales* may be taken to represent the horizontal axis of Florentine association. Chaucer's other fictions, he proposes, 'may be plotted within their vertical and horizontal planes' (p. 3).

For all the differences between the bodies of texts that Patterson and Wallace connect with Chaucer's, their two books effectually share a single plot. For Patterson, this is the trajectory of Chaucer's œuvre, seen as moving from a preoccupation with social determination (as in chivalry's demands that the knight understand his identity as entirely social) to a concern with the problematics of being an individual. Towards the end of Chaucer's work, history, as Patterson would have it, is understood not as predetermined but contingent upon one's own actions. Human beings subjected to the tyrannies studied by Wallace might be thought of as analogous to the person as simply the subject of social determination. Similarly, the formation of fellowships, companies, guilds presumes the existence of free agents, free to negotiate. And while in England, during the centuries that Wallace covers, events ran from a proliferation of associations like parish guilds to their abolition in the 1540s amid Tudor absolutism, association has not been defeated in the long run, least so in the United States, which can date itself from the Mayflower Compact.

If left-leaning teachers are to critique the reproductive function of literary education within capitalism (and both Patterson and Wallace take pains to establish themselves as progressive), then those who are also medievalists might be expected to take up the political force of Chaucer's texts within his own society. Wallace no less than Patterson,

in fact, has tried to think socially about Chaucer, and he criticizes two great historians of the Renaissance, Jacob Burckhardt and Hans Baron, for ignoring economic matters (pp. 56, 61). It is remarkable, then, that neither deals with Chaucer's texts as the products, in part, of Chaucer's specific ecopolitical interests. Accordingly, they are seldom concerned with gaps or disjunctions within his texts.

The political force of Chaucer's writing does not come from some reflection of history outside the text or a transparent statement of ideology. What Patterson has to say about the portrait of the Plowman in the General Prologue holds for the rest of the Chaucerian text as well. The portrait, Patterson writes, 'assiduously effaces the very real economic struggles of Chaucer's contemporary world [...]'.[8] Chaucer made virtually no explicit mention of the three major struggles that convulsed London in the 1380s. Even in the *Canterbury Tales*, often thought to give the age in cross section, the conflicts that will eventually transform society are virtually invisible. Nonetheless, it does not follow that Chaucer occupied no positions within these struggles, that these positions were not a condition for the production of his poetry, or that this invisibility or silence should be taken as forestalling political criticism.

Like every writer, Chaucer chooses 'to be the spokesman for a certain condition'. But he also 'expresse[s] that choice. These are two different operations [...]'. An ideological project becomes, that is, a project of writing, for it must invent or find 'forms of expression'.[9] On the one hand, the existence of any literary work presupposes a social consciousness, tending either to reproduce or change existing material conditions. On the other, ideology, as Pierre Macherey remarks, has no place in the text 'except as it is confronted by strictly literary means'.[10] Even what seem to be pieces of everyday ideology – like the Man of Law's view that one is better off to be dead than to be poor[11] – are changed by their appearance within a second history, the history of literary forms.[12] Chaucer's ideological projects become projects of writing. They thus become invisible within texts. But their afterlife is not that of some hidden meaning that could be revealed to bring a text into unity. Rather, they exist like a shoal, causing a

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[8] Page 31. What Wallace writes of Petrarch is equally true of Chaucer: 'Petrarch's epistles, though full of historical detail, tend to escape or erase the specific moment of their historical origin' (p. 266).

[9] Pierre Macherey, *A Theory of Literary Production*, trans. by Geoffrey Wall (London: Routledge, 1978), pp. 94, 91.

[10] Macherey, p. 116.

[11] *Canterbury Tales*, II, 114.

[12] See Macherey, p. 132.

disturbance within a current, creating textual disjunctions and contradictions.

In the first of the three major struggles in England in the 1380s, the governing class, which comprised interdependent landlords and merchants, struggled with the direct producers, the peasantry. Feudalism was in fact in crisis, first of all because of contradictions within itself. Because the peasant workers possessed the productive means, extraction of the surplus lessened their ability to produce. They could not use the surplus to buy plow animals, for example, which in turn might supply fertilizer. Lower productivity meant that the lords needed an even higher percentage of the output if their revenues were to be maintained. Hence a vicious circle. Moreover, the ultimate need for a center of authority in extracting the surplus seems to have been contradicted by feudalism's 'own rigorous tendency to a decomposition of sovereignty'.[13] The crisis was surely exacerbated by the sharp decline in the English population, perhaps by forty percent between 1300 and 1400. Grain prices fell because fewer people needed to eat. Since vacant tenancies on the manors were filled largely by persons who had been landless, the number of wage laborers dropped more sharply than the population as a whole. As a consequence, wages rose steadily through the second half of the century. Thus landlords faced lower revenues but higher costs. Among the causes of the 1381 rising were such measures taken by the governing class as enactment of Statutes of Laborers and the collection and even increase of servile fines. Wallace discusses Chaucer as if his text had no force with respect to this contest. Patterson does claim that 'the *Miller's Tale* takes part in this struggle, and not least by subverting and mocking the very terms with which the reigning ideology sought to stigmatize and oppress peasants' (p. 264). But even if Patterson is right about the Miller's Tale, and I think he is not, he also claims that Chaucer thinks of the Miller's Tale as a 'false start' to the *Canterbury Tales* (p. 422) and has the Reeve direct 'the oppositional dynamics of the *Canterbury Tales*' from political hostility to less inflammatory matters (p. 277).

Where this first struggle came home to Chaucer's London for certain days in June 1381, a second caused sporadic dissension and even violence there during the whole first half of the 1380s. This was the competition between commercial and productive capital. Whether the pilgrim Merchant in the *Canterbury Tales* exports raw wool or woolen cloths, he is certainly a wholesaler. The late-medieval usage of *merchant* implied primarily wholesale trade, with the particular

[13] Perry Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism* (London: NLB, 1974), p. 152.

commodities being a matter of indifference to the merchant. The Church sometimes deplored money like the Merchant's, which is commercial, not productive, capital, functioning simply to promote the exchange of commodities, leaving the character of any particular product unaffected: Gratian wrote that '[w]hoever buys a thing, not that he may sell it whole and unchanged, but that it may be a material for fashioning something, he is not a merchant. But the man who buys it in order that he may gain by selling it again unchanged and as he bought it, that man is of the buyers and sellers who are cast forth from God's temple.'[14] Productive capital, the use of money to buy a material for 'fashioning something', can also buy a day's labor; and it had unmistakable uses both in the country and in the towns of Chaucer's England. Often, when declining population left peasant holdings vacant, the landlord simply added them to the demesne and used wage labor. When agricultural prices fell, landlords tended to commute feudal labor service to money, which meant they had to hire workers for the demesne. More interestingly, peasants themselves often hired workers.[15] Peasant *employers* like these rebelled in 1381, for they wished to compete for available help and objected to wage freezes under the Statutes of Laborers. Productive capital was also in evidence in London and the towns and in such rural industries as mining and fulling. In London, companies like the saddlers and cordwainers remained predominantly industrial. Opportunities for journeymen in London seem to account for the presence among the 1381 rebels of 'a very great number of [...] village craftsmen and tradesmen', presumably aggrieved by restraints on their ability to relocate.[16] Regulations attempting to limit the number of employees – no more than three apprentices, according to one London ordinance – testify to the possibility for creating surplus value. So do attempts to evade the regulations: in the next century a master will be fined for joining two guilds in order to combine the quotas of labor allowed by each. The conflict that tore the city of London over control of city government in the early 1380s pitted Nicholas Brembre and the *officia mercatoria*, or the companies using commercial capital, against John of Northampton and the party that has often been inaccurately called the

[14] Part 1, dist. 88, ch. 11; *Decretrum Magistri Gratiani*, ed. by Aemilius Friedberg, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1879), I, 309. Trans. mine.

[15] From the thirteenth century at least, 'a top stratum of peasants' 'exploited the labor of the smallholders', adding land to their holdings despite the resistance of landlords (E. A. Kosminsky, 'The Evolution of Feudal Rent in England from the XIth to the XVth Centuries', *Past and Present*, 7 (1955), p. 18).

[16] *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381*, comp. by R. B. Dobson (London: Macmillan, 1970), p. 17.

'nonvictualers'. Northampton's party actually drew mainly from the class of small masters who had most to lose from policies that kept them from expanding production – from using capital, that is, to create surplus value.

The use of productive capital – what Marx called 'the really revolutionary way' – was emerging all over Europe.[17] Chaucer, a merchant's son who worked with merchants daily as controller of the wool custom and subsidy, occupied a position within this conflict. We might reasonably expect some of his poetry to have been motivated by his interest here. Patterson, who appears to collapse the difference between commercial and productive capital altogether (pp. 190, 350), seems never to mention this conflict. Wallace does point to governmental action to prevent journeymen from organizing. Moreover, he also finds Chaucer alluding in the Cook's Tale to the antagonism of victualers and the so-called nonvictualers but then doing nothing with the issue (p. 168). That Chaucer is thus silent evidently leads Wallace, too, to do nothing further with the issue. Wallace uses the word 'capital' in figurative ways. About a certain Dominican chapter house in Florence, for example, he says that 'this space [...] tells of a slow and deliberate migration of merchant wealth into artistic and spiritual capital' (p. 191). Whether for Florence or London, Boccaccio or Chaucer, however, he does not take up the difference between commercial and productive capital or the difference that that difference makes for either writer.

Where the aristocratic component of the exploiting class struggled with peasants within the feudal relations of production, and where the mercantile component struggled with certain companies of small masters, the aristocratic component itself was divided in the third of the conflicts, with the young Richard II pitted against some of the greatest landlords in his kingdom. It was a conflict that cost Chaucer his post at the custom and subsidy, and that he may well have perceived as a danger to his personal safety. In what the historian J. J. N. Palmer has called 'undoubtedly the gravest attack on the Crown since the turbulent reign of Edward II',[18] Michael de la Pole, chancellor of England from 1383, was impeached, stripped of lands, and ordered to prison by the one parliament in which Chaucer sat, the Wonderful Parliament of 1386. Destroyed thus in Chaucer's presence was the senior member of the Ricardian administration. The opposition to Pole, which included such great magnates as the king's own uncle,

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[17] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, ed. by Frederick Engels, trans. by Ernest Untermann, 3 vols (Chicago: Kerr, 1906–1909), III, 395.

[18] 'The Impeachment of Michael de la Pole in 1386', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 42 (1969), 96.

Thomas Duke of Gloucester, targeted Pole in part because, as chancellor, he resisted the magnates' aims abroad, single-mindedly pursuing a policy of disengagement and peace. Because Edward III had claimed the French throne, the English could not now honorably take simply a defensive posture; and because Pole estimated that Commons would never vote enough funds for England to win, he did nothing to jeopardize the possibility of peace. His policy of disengagement enraged the magnates, whose 'trade [...] was war' and who 'grew fat on loot and ransoms, or at any rate hoped to do so'.[19] Although it would not be until November 1387 that three magnates would stand before the king and accuse Pole and others of treason, Chaucer, also a member of the king's affinity, was gone from the wool quay within weeks of parliament's impeachment of Pole. Pole fled the country; but in 1388 there were executions: three of Richard's chamber knights, the chief justice, and Nicholas Brembre, the merchant who was mayor of London and collector of the custom for some of the time that Chaucer was controller. The impression left by Patterson's and Wallace's books is that Chaucer's political interests in these events had little effect upon his poetry. Perhaps because Patterson appears to look for something like a one-for-one, term-for-term reflection from historical to poetic event, he takes this conflict as entering Chaucer's poetry only so far as Pole's impeachment by the Commons in 1386 may be reflected in the ruinous exchange of Criseyde for Antenor by the Trojan parliament in Book 4 of *Troilus and Criseyde* (pp. 158–59).

What, then, is the social force of Chaucer's poetry? One idea within capitalism is that individual workers negotiate to sell the capital of their labor. Patterson and Wallace see compromise and accommodation, a negotiation between equals, being promoted by the Chaucerian text. Patterson finds commerce legitimating itself in Chaucer by authorising 'a range of attitudes upon which the future could be built', including 'a republican sense of cooperation among equals' (p. 326).[20] The idea of a whole private sphere of consumption, standing in opposition to a public sphere of production, distributes possibilities for negotiation over dual sites. Patterson finds Chaucer already dealing favorably with this division of public and private. Writing about the Shipman's Tale, where the characters are a merchant, his wife, and a monk, Patterson

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[19] J. J. N. Palmer, *England, France, and Christendom, 1377–99* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), pp. 239–40.

[20] Of the denouement of the Wife of Bath's Prologue, for example, Patterson says, 'A violent assault precipitates an equally violent rejection; but then a more subtle approach disarms the opposition and allows for the beginnings of accommodation' (p. 311).

says, '[...] The central assumption upon which the order of the merchant's existence is based is precisely that there can be a *difference* between the domestic world of garden, feast hall, and marriage bed and the mercantile world of countinghouse and market fairs'.[21] One version of this division between public and private has to do with human subjectivity. Chaucer's understanding of subjectivity is the focus of Patterson's book and the meaning of his title – 'Chaucer and the *Subject* of History'. In what is said to be Chaucer's idea of the subject (an idea that again rises within capitalism), there are, on the one hand, public demands upon us, especially so far as we belong to one group or another; expectations that we will take up one role or another within one kind of struggle or another. In Althusser's term, we are 'interpellated'. To name us is to place us in the 'symbolic order', as Lacan understood it. On the other hand, the subject is understood as not simply subjected in this way, but as an individual, experiencing particular demands and their costs, choosing among them, and so on. The individual who is constructed within capitalism as free or not to dispose of her or his labor reappears within this kind of psychology as already an identity prior to any subjection – as a subject existing prior to all experience, able to assess it and respond to it freely.

Patterson discerns this idea of the subject in Chaucer. He claims that Chaucer shows us that character is 'the product of a dialectical movement between a socially undefined subjectivity [...] and a historically determined role. Character is what emerges from the transactions between the given world outside (history) and the unspecified world within [...]' (p. 29). So, for example, writing of the pilgrim Prioress, Patterson claims that her conflict between 'two conflicting social definitions of femininity' is 'the means by which a hidden inwardness struggles to make itself known' (p. 30).[22] Patterson sees Chaucerian characters as negotiating this 'problematic relationship between outer and inner' (p. 16). In the Knight's Tale, as he reads it, Palamon and Arcite are caught in public roles that prevent 'individual development and submerge [...] the self in a surface pattern of ritual and replication' (p. 227). The Wife of Bath, by contrast, is 'fully self-possessed' (p. 299); her rhetoric both masks and discloses 'a socially undetermined subjectivity, a realm of private value [...]' (p. 322). The pilgrim Merchant, to whom the regnant idea of the three estates assigns no stable home, 'turns [...] to the inner world of the self as the space of self-definition' (p. 338). This self-possession

[21] Page 350, his emphasis. See also p. 345.

[22] In Chaucer's descriptions of the pilgrims, there are repeated 'signs of an inward self' (p. 31). 'For Arveragus, *trouthe* is an internal condition, a sense of integrity specific to the individual and wholly within his or her own keeping' (p. 196).

imputed by Patterson to the Wife of Bath is much like the control that Kittredge and Donaldson both found Chaucer to have exerted over his text. In the *House of Fame*, '[t]he great magician rejoices in the gambols of the spirits he has evoked', Kittredge writes, 'but they never break loose from his control'. 'Chaucer always knew what he was about' (pp. 101, 151). Donaldson describes the poet's control over reader responses – to Criseyde, for example ('we are never allowed', etc. [p. 83]). My point is not that this coherent inner self ('unified', as Kittredge wrote of Criseyde [p. 135]) is an incoherent notion of the human subject[23] or that Patterson is unaware that his understanding of the subject, and the understanding he imputes to Chaucer, exists within capitalist ideology (pp. 32, 322). To the contrary, he embraces this ideology, no doubt self-consciously and ambivalently, when, for example, he calls 'irreducible selfhood' 'the essence of human life'. My point, rather, is that so far as Chaucer is read in the schools in this light, there is nothing here to scare the horses.

The subject that Patterson finds in Chaucer does not simply negotiate a space between public and private. Chaucer shows, or so Patterson claims, that the pilgrim Merchant must somehow make do in the absence of 'a system of values, beliefs, and meanings,' since contemporary English society has left his class 'ideologically bereft' (pp. 337, 340; cf. p. 41). Captured by what Patterson calls 'the most ineradicable of bourgeois illusions' (p. 333), at least some Chaucerian subjects, he thinks, believe that they belong to no class in particular.[24] If one does not act out of a class interest, one may simply analyze, standing outside ideology and therefore seeing events as specific to an historical moment rather than necessary or somehow timeless. Patterson describes Proserpina in the Merchant's Tale as such an observer (p. 341). He repeatedly describes Chaucer, too, as an analyst, as if Chaucer himself really stood outside ideology. Patterson calls the *Canterbury Tales*, for instance, 'the shrewdest and most capacious *analysis* of late medieval society we possess'.[25] Chaucer was an observer 'seeking detachment' (p. 179) and self-understanding, who critiqued chivalry as 'an ideological conditioning that preclude[d]

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[23] Although it is incoherent. Desire, as Jacques Lacan has shown, is not a radically inner content, because every object of desire, every representation, exists within language and is already socially given. So far as the Lacanian subject is desire *tout court*, the subject is nothingness and death. See Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, *Lacan: The Absolute Master*, trans. by Douglas Brick (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991).

[24] Patterson remarks that late-medieval writing emanating from or directed towards the middle class refused 'to align itself with a socially specific perspective' (p. 331).

[25] Page 26, my emphasis; cf. pp. 167–68, 169, 202, 227.

self-reflection' (p. 176). Chaucer was prepared to critique the same 'sovereign selfhood' that he championed (p. 424). Similarly, Kittredge had already found Chaucer and much of his century to be familiar rather than strange because of the poet's 'scientific temper' and critical posture (p. 8), a supreme irony that achieved 'artistic detachment' for him (pp. 125, 38), an irony that Donaldson also repeatedly indicates, of course (e.g., pp. 3, 15, 16). Patterson is quick to point to the posture as bourgeois strategy (e.g., pp. 322, 324). Here I am simply underscoring that this bourgeois Chaucer – offering merchants as pragmatic and unideological, offering himself as simply an analytic observer, promoting 'critical thinking', as it has come to be called – this bourgeois Chaucer functions to reproduce a dominant American ideology.

Patterson and Wallace both see commodification touching everything in Chaucer. Even Chaucer's 'awe-inspiring Man of Law', writes Wallace, 'is touched by the commercial forces that structure his professional life' (p. 211). The Shipman's Tale leaves nothing unmodified by the market, even marriage. If the totalizing reach of a 'market-based ethic' (as Patterson calls it) bespeaks the fallenness of the world, he thinks that Chaucer believes there to be 'reparation after loss, compensation for disinheritance [...]'. If the bourgeois life provides the site where marriage and business merge, it also provides the means to make both forms of life not merely legitimate but desirable' (p. 352). Allowing for quaintness, the plot of the *Canterbury Tales*, as Wallace describes it, serves nicely as a description of a global future, now that America emerges as the only superpower: 'The somber, claustrophobic, courtly societies of Theseus and Walter', Wallace writes, referring to the Knight's and Clerk's Tales, 'yield to the cheerful, mobile market economies of Alisoun and May' (p. 294).

Not all Americans might agree that the business of America is business ('there is scarcely a political or social catchword of the present [...] which does not fit the fourteenth century', Kittredge maintained [p. 2]). But they would probably approve of Chaucer's having shown tyrants coming to a bad end; and they would probably approve, too, of the '[t]he self-constituting dynamics of associational form' with which Wallace finds Chaucer preoccupied in his General Prologue (pp. 295, 65). Wallace sees the parish guild as an influential model for Chaucer in this, because the sexes mixed there. Wallace, however, has little to say about the structure of the great companies (for example the grocers and the vintners), to which Chaucer's known associates belonged and where the place of women was quite different. And Wallace does not mention, I think, the homage—all the peasants who owed suit of court on a manor and who passed judgment on some of their own. The homage, while scarcely composed of persons

coming freely together, seems to help explain why economic history took a different course in England than it did on the Continent. In the propensity to associate, nonetheless, Wallace surely seizes upon a phenomenon with which Americans are at home. They know association from the idea that their national government has been constituted by people coming freely together. They know it also from their experience of democratic practice in America. 'In the United States', wrote Tocqueville, 'political associations are only one small part of the immense number of different types of associations found there. Americans of all ages, all stations in life, and all types of disposition are forever forming associations. There are not only commercial and industrial associations in which all take part, but others of a thousand different types—religious, moral, serious, futile, very general and very limited, immensely large, and very minute.'[26] Not coincidentally, perhaps, Wallace finds the countryside in Chaucer full of mysterious and salvific power (e.g., p. 154). Henry Nash Smith, in his book *Virgin Land*, saw the garden as the master symbol of America's 'grand *collective* enterprise'.[27] Having found that Chaucer writes the General Prologue in the light of associational ideals, Wallace goes on to register 'the continuing *desire* in Chaucer's text to represent the countryside as endowed with and protected by immanent metaphysical powers'.[28]

Medievalism has to do with the use of the Middle Ages. Surely there is no form of study of the Middle Ages that is not also a medievalism; and of course there is no medievalism that is not also a form of study. Althusser maintained that ideology has no history, in the sense that ideology 'is endowed with a structure and a functioning such as to make it a non-historical reality, i.e. an *omni-historical* reality, in the sense in which that structure and functioning are immutable, present in the same form through what we can call history [...]'.[29] Kittredge encloses himself and the poet within ideology precisely by denying there is ideology, only truth; for he thought the poet had given accounts 'of universal application' about 'the everlasting truth' of 'changeless human nature' (pp. 94, 1). By contrast, Patterson and Wallace insist on Chaucer's poetry as ideological; but if it actually has the political force that they describe,

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[26] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. by J. P. Mayer, trans. by George Lawrence (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969), p. 513.

[27] Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 143; my emphasis.

[28] Page 143, his emphasis. This mysterious power may actually have a great deal to do with the homage, which, as I suggest, Wallace seems to neglect.

[29] 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', p. 161.

then, taught in the schools, it does little to historicize dominant American thinking. If Chaucer is indeed our contemporary, who, as Patterson claims, 'participated and continues to participate in the making of our world' (p. 424), then certain ideas of ours, functional in reproducing a certain mode of production, begin to attain to immutability. But I am not sure that Chaucer is our contemporary. I believe that a criticism that attends to the conditions of the production of his poetry – not only his historical situation but an ideological version of that situation determinable from his text, particularly from disparities within it – will find that his poems have a political force that Patterson and Wallace do not often suggest.

If, nonetheless, Chaucer should still somehow turn out to be our contemporary, then literary education can still challenge the notion that he somehow succeeded in becoming a disinterested observer, detached from class or gender or race. And if he should turn out to be our contemporary, then literary education should also reserve a place, I think, for writers who are not. Until students experience authors whose writing projects were activated on behalf of positions that make no sense except within relations of production other than our own, I do not see how students can come to understand the contingency of our own social formation – that it was wrested into existence by human agents and is maintained only with the strenuous efforts of other agents. And of course we help our own students to become politically active when they experience that our culture, non-necessary as it is, might have been, and therefore yet may be, otherwise.

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MEDIEVALISM AND THE PROBLEM OF RADICAL EVIL IN SNODGRASS'S *THE FUEHRER BUNKER*

DAVID METZGER[1]

THE FUEHRER BUNKER WORKS from two perspectives: the perspective of history and the perspective of individual Nazis (Goebbels, Eva Braun, Hermann Goering, Albert Speer, and others). Given what we know about the Nazis, this is a most curious choice. For one thing, as Hannah Arendt[2] has persuasively argued in her now classic essay *The Origins of Totalitarianism* the Nazis themselves assumed the perspective of history, leading them to treat those they labeled 'a dying race' as (from the perspective of history) already 'dead'. For another thing, from Plato to the present day, ethicists have assumed that people attempt 'to pursue the good' as they see it, so that any attempt to delineate a particular individual's perspective risks formulating that individual's aims in terms of 'the good' or, at the very least, 'his or her good'. By working either from the perspective of history or from the perspective of particular Nazis, Snodgrass risks delineating something quite abhorrent, 'the Totalitarian Good'.

Irony has been one defense against delineating some 'Totalitarian Good'. And so has bald-faced imitation. Irony, however, creates its own difficulties for the writer; the writer must be satisfied with her buffoons and the fact that their actions must be confined to 'antics', as we might see, for example, in the 1960s American television program 'Hogan's Heroes'. Imitation (delineating the distinguishing features of 'horror' and 'monstrosity') would then seem to be the answer, except for the fact that horror, according to Snodgrass, does not merely seem to be human. Monstrous horror is human. What distinguishes 'being a monster' from being 'something else' is 'being human'. So, as a poet, Snodgrass cannot rely on the Nazis' 'drama of becoming monsters' to re-introduce his readers to the possibility of

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[1] The author wishes to thank W. D. Snodgrass for his helpful comments regarding an early draft of this essay. Although the final essay does not necessarily represent the author's point of view, his comments were instrumental in the development of this essay. The author also wishes to acknowledge Richard Utz for the patience, intelligence, and care with which he has prepared this volume.

[2] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), p. 145.

evil. If being a monster means being human, Snodgrass must, in some fashion, imitate who we are – we the readership, we the presumably human. Then, doesn't Snodgrass run the risk of making 'evil' in some ways good? Evil is what some people do for the good of their families; evil is what some people do for the good of their nation; evil is what some people do when their only other choice is to die. Indeed, evil is a truer form of good?

The epigraphs to *The Fuehrer Bunker* demonstrate the poet's awareness of the costs of his decision to show the limitations of irony and the moral consequences of imitation.[3] In the first epigraph, Goebbels indicates that he is quite aware of the fact that any attempt to historicize the Third Reich risks repeating it, 'Even if we lose this war, we still win, for our spirit will have penetrated our enemies' hearts'. In the second epigraph, Mother Teresa tells us that she began working for abandoned children, 'On the day I discovered I had a Hitler inside me'. The irony, here, may be both offensive and extravagant. A contemporary winner of the Nobel peace prize runs from (or subverts?) the possibility of becoming a Hitler, while Dr Goebbels provides us with the moral, 'our spirit will have penetrated our enemies' hearts'. Why would Snodgrass allow the actions of a saint to breathe life into the words of a monster? Why would Snodgrass show us this place from which a totalitarian dream might be reality? Is Snodgrass suggesting that without a Hitler there would be no Mother Teresa?

Snodgrass's response to these questions is quite surprising, and it resides at the level of the poet's craft and not simply the poetry's content: the challenge to the poet is not in representing totalitarianism but in not representing totalitarianism. Remember, for Snodgrass, being monsters is what *we* are; being monsters is good (for the family, for the state). So, how is it possible to speak or write well about 'evil' given the fact that it is so familiar and so dependent on 'our good'?

Snodgrass rewrites history. More specifically, Snodgrass's work experiments with irony, imitation, and historical perspective in such a way that history might be reviewed in a new light. History, understood as a problem at the level of Snodgrass's craft, is not a perspective or a series of perspectives; history is where irony and imitation might differentiate themselves outside of historical perspective. This view of history will be examined in two parts: 1) an examination of the relationship between irony and imitation in selected Old Lady Barkeep Verses, taking into account Snodgrass's use of an ironic figure from Renaissance song and verse to subvert the ethics of historical

[3] W. D. Snodgrass, *The Fuehrer Bunker: The Complete Cycle* (Brockport, NY: BOA Editions, 1995), p. 11.

perspective; 2) a discussion of how the problem of 'radical evil' has prompted a rereading of medieval philosophy among a variety of cultural and critical theorists who have attempted to construct an ethics of history. What I propose, here, is not a study of medievalism in Snodgrass's *The Fuehrer Bunker*; rather, it is a study of the medievalism in contemporary critical/cultural theory, a medievalism sparked by the attempt to construct an ethics of history when history, something projected on the axis of imitation, is supposed to fall into the field of the literary, something projected on the axis of irony.[4] Without a specific example, of course, this particular orientation of the problem of radical evil would be impossible to follow: the assumptions behind the argument would be too numerous and too abstract. But there is another reason for beginning with Snodgrass's *The Fuehrer Bunker* rather than rushing to identify medieval themes in the work of Jameson or Lyotard or some other theorist. We may wish to evaluate the validity of the cultural studies project – not as students of culture but as students of medievalism. And *The Fuehrer Bunker* shows us how art and history (which Snodgrass juxtaposes and conflates throughout the collection) have not failed to meet the challenges of representing and responding to the Nazis; rather, art and history have failed to support the desire of the cultural critic: to do away with evil simply by identifying it as such. Our examination of imitation and irony, history and art, in Snodgrass's collection will then put us in the position to offer medievalism's response to cultural studies as it has been conceived in the United States: 'the medieval cannot bear the burden of your desire either'.

In the first section of *The Fuehrer Bunker*, Snodgrass invites us to consider the limitations of ironic responses to evil. This first grouping of poems are dated '1 April 1945', April Fool's Day, the day on which we might see that we are duped, and the narrator of the first poem is called 'Old Lady Barkeep'. A brief, parenthetical note tells us that 'During World War II, Berliners revived a figure from Renaissance song and verse, Frau Wirtin, for satirical verse, similar to limericks and often obscene, about their leaders'.[5] Frau Wirtin is allowed to say things that others are not; she is able to talk about a leader with his pants down; she is able to show us how, in a leader's actions, one might see the promise of being dead enough to enjoy *it*, whatever *it* might be.

In fact, the first poem[6] of the cycle (dated 1 April 1945) is held

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[4] A careful elaboration of the tension between art and history in holocaust studies is provided by Berel Lang, *Act and Idea in the Nazi Genocide* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990), especially chapter 6.

[5] Snodgrass, p. 15.

[6] Snodgrass, p. 15.

together by a series of ironic juxtapositions: the enemies are 'bloody cunts' while 'like lady-killers at a dance, his troops found out that they'd shot their wad' and 'irresistible Supermen/ Crept like ants or moles' (11–14). But what we are witnessing here isn't a carnival where the 'fool's momentary enjoyment' tells us something about those who secretly enjoy the performance of higher office.[7] What is the cost of a lot of enjoyment? What is the cost of a little enjoyment? Same Price, Old Lady Barkeep observes, Death.

> In Old Lady Barkeep's shrunken Reich
> Herr Dr. Goebbels took the mike
> And vowed in his grand style:
> 'if it clots all your lives, my dears,
> Our reign will last a thousand years!
> Or twelve – same price. Sieg: Heil!' (21–26)

Through the person of Old Lady Barkeep, history emerges to make its statement, but 'history' is not a consciousness, or even a structuring of cause and effect that allows the last one dead to laugh best. History is invention. In this case, the invention of Old Lady Barkeep. Old Lady Barkeep might remind the high stepping soldiers about where they are marching to. You are enjoying at this moment, she says, but that enjoyment will be the death of you. What is more, she observes that there is more than a coincidental relationship between death and enjoyment. If you enjoy marching to battle, chances are you have chosen your death as your present enjoyment.

Thus, from the perspective of Old Lady Barkeep, we must be prepared for the possibility that the Nazis might speak to a general human condition: 'we all choose our deaths by how we presume to enjoy'. For this reason, Snodgrass runs the risk of making his characters too pathetic, too pathetic to be demons, and this is not something that many people are going to stomach: where Goering is *only* a foppish drug fiend; where Himmler is *only* a control freak; and Hitler is *only* a wanna-be coprophage. How does Snodgrass get himself out of this difficulty? From the perspective of Old Lady Barkeep, Snodgrass has only one choice: show how the Nazis might have been more than their secret enjoyment. But that solution has its own problem: if you show how the Nazis might have been more than their secret enjoyment, you run the risk of making Nazis human, something

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[7] For a detailed discussion of how the 'presumption of secret enjoyment' in cultural criticism has been projected into the fields of critical and liberatory pedagogy, see David Metzger, 'Teaching as a Test of Knowledge: Passion, Desire, and the Semblance of Truth in Teaching', *Rhetoric in an Antifoundational World*, ed. by Michael Bernard-Donals and Richard Glejzer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 423–35.

with which a readership might identify. Such, in fact, is the difficulty suggested by Snodgrass's choice of epigraphs, which we have already discussed.

Snodgrass, however, doesn't allow these identifications to occur; in fact, despite Mother Teresa's statement to the contrary, Snodgrass would be universally condemned for creating a work suggesting that such identifications were possible. Fortunately for Snodgrass, the Nazis of *The Fuehrer Bunker* are beyond identification. They may be beyond their own secret enjoyment, but they do not become quite human. They are, in their own words, absolute subjects to history.

For example, in the poem of 26 April 1945,[8] we can see Goebbels is quite aware of the 'history' to which he has succumbed.

> With no stab in the back, what could
> Authenticate the hero's blood?
> That lamb we sacrificed today,
> Given the time, would find some way
> To cut our throats. We Nazis used to say
> The Future's never been in doubt;
> That Past's what we must still work out. [...]
> I build that Past others will use
> when they need some lie or excuse
> to do exactly what they choose. (36–42; 47–49)

Goebbels presents the ethicist with an interesting problem, here, since ethical theories are grounded on the assumption that human beings choose. If a person does not choose, how would it be possible to determine by what 'ethical standards' that person chooses? The ethicist then speaks about how inaction is, in fact, a choice. The ethicist will not allow Goebbels his refuge in history, since Goebbels chose the history that he would follow. The Goebbels poem, however, complicates this rather neat and tidy philosophical response, since Goebbels too asserts that history is a matter of choice, but Goebbels limits choices to the past, and he identifies the future as that for which others will make choices. For this reason, Goebbels conceives of himself as the very ground for future ethical analyses; he is the past that will allow others to choose as they will and become part of some ethical machine.

But as Goebbels points out we cannot say that this 'future-being' ought to be without the intercession of history: that which will be dead ought to be dead now. There is still a difficulty in moving from an 'is' to an 'ought' or from an 'ought' to an 'is'. However, the difficulty has had a change in accent; 'is' cannot equal 'ought', but 'will be'

[8] Snodgrass, pp. 146–47.

can equal 'ought'. The ethical force of the argument has shifted from the predicates to the temporal operators: will be = will be and now. But this position, as Voltaire has demonstrated admirably in *Candide*, can itself be seen to be ironic. In this arena, Voltaire, the artist, addresses quite effectively Leibniz, the philosopher. For, in the narration of *Candide*, there can always be something more, something more can happen, just as there can always be more in the future. For this reason, history appears to have an ironic affect, even if it may not be said to be itself ironic. In fact, the expression 'the future' may be ill-formed; perhaps, we should only speak of 'a future'.

To make the expression 'will be = will be and now' work, there must be an end to the future, at the very least a living death, a protracted nowness whose encounter with the future does not change its identity as 'now' to its identity as past. This horror is one of the ethical positions of genocide. By 'ethical' I do not mean 'O.K'. or even 'understandable', or even 'logical'. I am suggesting that, in this regard, 'genocide' can be conceived as a product of ethics as it has been represented in western traditions: how might an 'ought' entail an 'is' and vice versa? The Nazis provided one answer to this question: Murder the future (as possibility) now, so that the future (as certainty) might be now. That is, it is certain that these people (the Jews) will be dead, so we should kill them now. Hannah Arendt[9] has pointed out that this statement can also become a ferocious logic of 'apparent survival', as she sees in the Nazi invention of the *Judenrat*, an organization of Jewish elders whose job it was to decide whose futures would be lost now so that the now of some others would be lost in the future.[10]

Of course, these explanations will seem too neat, too clear, too susceptible to logical explanation and rhetorical ornament. It is at this moment that Snodgrass would presume to intercede. When language is everywhere (as Heidegger has expressed it in his essay 'Language, Poetry, and Thought') when there doesn't seem to be anything that cannot be said in language and said as language, then the poet's work can begin. At the level of craft, at the level of the choices one makes about and in writing, there is something beyond irony (beyond the more of narrative). There is the promise of imitation. But an imitation

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[9] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1963), pp. 166–78.

[10] The standard work on the Jewish Councils is Isaiah Trunk's *Judenrat* (New York: Stein and Day, 1972). Although Arendt's discussion follows a logic assumed in modern cultural analysis, the historical accuracy of it has been put into question, principally by Trunk. See further Gertrude Ezorsky, 'Hannah Arendt's View of Totalitarianism and the Holocaust', *Philosophical Forum*, 11 (1984), 63–81; and Nathan Rorenstreich, 'Can Evil Be Banal?', *Philosophical Forum*, 11 (1984), 50–62.

of what? The promise of an imitation of something that cannot be said, something that derails any attempt to relate one thing absolutely to another in language – this is the possibility of representing difference (difference from language) itself.

How is it possible to represent difference (difference from language) itself? There are two responses: either history (imitation) or art (irony). No doubt this statement will seem to be a bifurcation. Why not both or neither? Understand that what appears to be a choice, here, is more of a discursive exigency. As an exigency, the formulation 'history or art' need not provoke a discussion of this author's 'ideology': 'Ah, we now can identify the source of the author's secret enjoyment; we begin to see his difference from us'. Rather, this 'either history or art' quantifies what Lyotard, in his seminal work in holocaust studies, has called 'the differend'. 'In the differend, something asks to be put into phrases, and suffers from the wrong of not being able to be put into phrases right away'.[11] Lyotard's argument has been warmly received by a number of American cultural critics who find his notion of the 'differend' compatible with Derrida's *encomia* for 'the beyond'. However, the view presented here is that the differend is not an ecstatic experience as we find in Derrida's treatment of it in *Of Spirit*.[12] Our view is that the differend emerges out of Lyotard's attempt to understand why and how those who are called to bear witness to the Holocaust find themselves reduced to a discursive exigency: 'When I speak about my suffering, I do not know if it is history or art'?

One response to this difficulty is to speak through the Nazis. Take up something that the Nazis refused to speak but nevertheless carried along in their discourses. One version of this response is exemplified by the 'Fascist and Racist Readings Series' edited by George Steiner. Not forgetting the Nazis, in part, means continuing to publish Nazi propaganda but under the aegis of 'studying it in order to understand it so that Nazism might not happen again'. What are the costs of understanding the Nazis, if we are not careful to understand something about them that they could not? It is quite possible that the Nazis will not then go away; it is possible that they are not all dead. Popular film and television have exploited this fear with great profit. Hitler's brain

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[11] Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend*, trans. by Georges Vam Den Abeelle (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).

[12] Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. by Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989). For a detailed critique of Derrida's treatment of 'the beyond' see David Metzger, *The Lost Cause of Rhetoric* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1995), pp. 10–19, 53–55.

is in a vat somewhere; Hitler clones are alive and well in America's heartland; vast stores of Nazi wealth are waiting in the investments of Swiss bankers (that is, in *our* shopping malls, parking lots, and fast-food restaurants) waiting for the time when these enormous moneys might again be used, with compounded interest, as they were intended.[13]

Snodgrass makes a slightly different move. The Nazis are not lying in wait, even as the possibility of some old/new perverse enjoyment. The Nazis are here and now in Snodgrass's text; we don't need to fear their resurrection at some distant point in the future. We can look them in the eyes, now. Snodgrass takes the future away from the Nazis; he takes them out of the future and puts them in the present but as it might have been in the past.

Snodgrass's poems are not poems as if they were written by the Nazis; they were written by Snodgrass and the poems' overt formalism remind us of this. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which the reader is invited into the minds of the Nazis as one might be invited to examine historical materials. Then, at other times, the poems approach the level of graffiti; something written on a bathroom wall or sung in the streets –each section of the book opens with Old Lady Barkeep, and Old Lady Barkeep is given the last word in the collection.[14]

> Old Lady Barkeep squealed with laughter
> When told she'd be forsaken after
> Her people's sorry loss.
> She said, 'There's always mobs to swallow
> Lies that flatter them and follow
> Some savior to a cross.
> 'Don't kid yourself – I don't play modest;
> As Greed and Cowardice's goddess,
> I thrive on just such ruin.
> While humans prowl this globe of yours
> I'll never lack for customers.
> By the way, how *you* doin'?' (1–12)

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[13] These references to popular materials may hide the critique of history implied here. Let us recall, then, the arguments that prompted the 1994 cancellation of the Berlin and Saarbrücken exhibits of photographs by Hitler's photographer Hoffmann. Jerzy Kanal's response, published in *die tageszeitung*, shows clearly how the exhibit was perceived to be a value-less form of 'history': 'What has disturbed us in particular is that in the kind of exhibition there are gigantic marches and supplications shown. And one cannot suddenly argue, now, that in this fashion one unmasks Hitler'. Qtd and trans. by Michael Geyer, 'The Politics of Memory in Contemporary Germany', *Radical Evil*, ed. by Joan Copjec (London: Verso, 1996), 169–200 (p. 194).

[14] Snodgrass, p. 202.

The second line clearly indicates under what conditions Old Lady Barkeep was provoked to laughter. Beginning with the second and third lines, however, readers can see their expectations diverted a bit. When will Old Lady Barkeep be forsaken? She gives two answers, as the two lines are read: (1) After, and (2) After / Her people's sorry loss. Answer One: In the future she will be forsaken, but when is that? Answer Two: She will be forsaken in the now of 'Her people's sorry loss', but when is that?

As Old Lady Barkeep would put it, we are creatures dead to anything outside of history, and we are, therefore, at her mercy. We make our beds and then we die in them. But what about life and the living? What about those who would refuse to be identified with the italicized 'you' of her final question? She would remind us that, from the perspective of history, we are all dead. But what if we refuse to be herded into the all that might be addressed by this 'you'? Does Old Lady Barkeep know anything about us except that all those who hear her utterance are subject to it? Does she know anything but the inevitability of death? What, if anything, is not accounted for in her question?

Answer: that the reference for the pronoun 'you' is vacant. That is, we all may have set a place for death at our holiday tables, but the chair is empty for us – while if history could set a holiday table the only chair that wouldn't be empty would be death's. We aren't there for our deaths – unless we choose to give up life, like Goebbels, being for death, and taking on the position of history as Old Lady Barkeep does, and as all the Nazis have before in Snodgrass's poem. Does this mean that Old Lady Barkeep is a Nazi? No, the Nazis become the inverted image of Old Lady Barkeep; just as they swallow and are swallowed by history, so does she as well, finding in the certainty of death nothing but fantasies made possible by the fact that there is always more to say even though there is never enough time to say *it*, whatever this *it* might be.

I do not doubt that many will find Snodgrass's ending to be a little naive; it smacks too much of a B-movie, some will think, 'The gigantic ants have been squashed; the blob has been frozen. The End?' But if we recognize where Snodgrass has taken us over the course of the book, there is another possible reception of his work. As I see it, Snodgrass has managed to end his work showing the vacancy of Old Lady Barkeep's 'Call to Death'. We might even see her as something of a Mephistopheles saying, 'So, you wish to know everything, so you wish to live in a world where there is a word for everything, so you desire the certainty of death, good luck!' Marlowe's Dr Faustus, fails to conceive of something beyond his pact with the Devil, namely grace,

so he is damned. Goethe's Faust, conceives of something beyond his pact with the Devil, namely community, so he is saved.[15]

What other move is open to Snodgrass? To show how the Mephistophelean choice (all versions of what I have identified as a 'call to death') is hollow. In other words, you will die whether you make the choice to die or not. Old Lady Barkeep's 'You' will not live on in history; indeed, despite Goebbels's rather pretentious epigraph, he, as 'some you/any you', will not live on in history. What remains is his particular choice of death made in the absence of history, that is, the choice to die he made in the absence of his death. The B-movie trick 'The End?' says something quite different. The horror may continue, it says; the horror may lurk anywhere; any action might serve the secret agenda of the horror; the horror is beyond death because it has never answered the call to life.

We have delineated a view of history particular to Snodgrass's *Fuehrer Bunker*, but the student of medievalism will show us much more. The student of medievalism will push us to see how the ethics of history presented by Snodgrass's cycle of poems relates to contemporary identity politics, particularly as cultural critics find themselves drawn to the medieval, and medievalists find themselves drawn to contemporary theories of culture and sexual politics. We are encouraged, then, to see what lies behind the rapport between critical/cultural theory and medieval studies. Even if we wish to think that modern scholars will always follow their own self-interests, the student of medievalism asks us to identify the intellectual and/or material conditions that provoke this particular manifestation of self-interest and not some other.

There is an uncomplicated explanation. Medieval theologians and philosophers offer modern critics the most accessible discussions on the subject of evil. And they offer the cultural critic something of a maxim: Accounting for the existence of evil is not so easy if one assumes that evil does not 'exist' in the same way that 'good' might. Boethius, in the *Consolation of Philosophy*, even went so far as to suggest that evil does not 'positively' exist; evil 'exists' as the negation of 'good'. Within this scheme, evil is conceived as something constructed one negation at a time – without the possibility of a collective generalization. Evil is essentially (and hence ironically) particular, individual, and contingent. Thus, evil can only appear to be an inverted image of good; at the level of its essence, evil is unthinkable except as something always to be deferred in light of

[15] For an ingenious discussion of Faust and the modernization of evil, see Peter Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason*, trans. by Michael Eldwood (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp. 174–95.

some individual or pragmatic good. This may be one explanation for our attraction to villains; they seem to be up to something (namely they seem to be human subjects in the making – that is, evil) while the James Bonds of these fictional worlds seem to have it all; they can enjoy themselves as themselves and completely. The villains only enjoy themselves partially and with assistance; they can only enjoy through their James Bonds – by telling the James Bonds all about their evil plans. The James Bonds, then, do everything in their power to make it impossible for the villains to enjoy their evil plans without their James Bonds.

Yet, we still must ask, 'What is the appeal of such notions?' We must ask, 'Why not simply invent whatever notions you need, why make the pretense at history?' In order to respond to these questions, we will examine two statements provided by the American cultural critic and Marxist theorist Fredric Jameson. The first statement is taken from his highly influential *The Political Unconscious*.[16] The second statement is from a much more recent publication.[17]

Statement 1:

> A social hermeneutic will wish to keep faith with its medieval precursor in just this respect, and must necessarily restore a perspective in which the imagery of libidinal revolution and of bodily transfiguration once again becomes a figure for the perfected community.

Statement 2:

> Sexuality now allows the practice of a permanent self-examination, which itself also predicates the permanent existence of that new thing called the Self, of which Augustine is notoriously the inventor. [...] The modern intellectual is constituted at precisely this point [D.M.: the point at which 'preoccupation with the subject necessarily withdraws creative energies from the social and from praxis'], with the mission equally precisely to constitute the Self as such, as an ideological solution.

Taken together, these statements identify a persistent theme in Jameson's cultural/theoretical project: ideological critique and 'utopian vision' are both necessary components for a socially transformative activism. In the first statement, ideological critique takes

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[16] Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 74.

[17] Fredric Jameson, 'On the Sexual Production of Western Subjectivity: or, Saint Augustine as a Social Democrat', in *Gaze and Voice as Love Objects*, ed. by Renata Salecl and Slavoj Zizek (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), p. 178.

the form of a restoration of perspective, in the second, 'permanent self-examination'. And we can see 'utopian vision' in both 'the perfected community' and 'the Self as an ideological solution'. Taken together, these statements also show us that Jameson's interest in the medieval has not been fleeting. Yet, we would never speak of Jameson as a medievalist; in fact, many would not think Jameson a historian despite his famous command at the beginning of *The Political Unconscious*: 'Always historicize!' Neither his discussion of medieval hermeneutics nor his discussion of St Augustine seems to be informed or complicated by a medieval text or the views of a medieval historian (with the exception of Peter Brown). How is it then possible to respond to Jameson? I think it should be very hard to respond as a medievalist, except to criticize his scholarship and try to extinguish any desire on Jameson's part to learn anything from a medievalist. This is not a criticism of the historian's response; the response is quite reasonable.[18] But the student of medievalism may have another option, since she/he is in a position to historicize the work of Jameson.

To historicize Jameson is not simply to write a history within which he seems to play a part. Likewise, when Jameson tells us to 'historicize' he does not mean that history is a discourse, that history prompts individuals to think of themselves as part of a community.

[18] More to the point, many medievalists who have expressed interest in medievalism may have resolved the tension between art and history in such a way that a discussion with so-called theorists or cultural critics might be impossible or unnecessary. For an example of the former, see Lee Patterson, 'On the Margin: Postmodernism, Ironic History, and Medieval Studies', *Speculum*, 65 (1990), 87–108 (p. 106). Patterson observes that medieval studies needs to attract nonmedievalists, even to the point of encouraging nonmedievalists to teach medieval literature. However, we also discover that Patterson is not interested in inviting all nonmedievalists into the pool: 'Certain forms of recent theory – structuralism, deconstruction, and psychoanalysis – provide programmatic discourses that direct postmodernism toward the universalism and essentialism that make possible just this historical disengagement.' Although such a statement is commonplace, it is quite surprising given the expansiveness with which 'The New Philology' has encouraged medievalists to promote medieval studies within the larger academic community. It seems that 'The New Philology' would appreciate the difference between art (code word, 'structure') and history by projecting irony onto the axis of imitation, hence the 'ironic history' in Patterson's title. For an example of a medievalism that seems to beat cultural criticism at its own game, see Norman Cantor, 'Medievalism and the Middle Ages', *Medievalism as an Integrated Study*, ed. David Metzger and Gwendolyn Morgan, *The Year's Work in Medievalism*, 9 (1994 (1997)), 13–27. Cantor suggests that medievalists might also find a position of social responsibility outside of the academy, not as critics of ideology, but as historians who write in popular (artistic?) genres, such as historical narratives and biographies. That is, for Cantor, the popular is a resolution of the tension between art and history we have been delineating.

Without a doubt, Jameson's desire is to identify 'art/literature' as a discourse, literature as the promise of solidarity: 'It is only at this price – that of the simultaneous recognition of the ideological and Utopian functions of the artistic text – that a Marxist cultural study can hope to play its part in political praxis, which remains, of course, what Marxism is all about.'[19] We see this quite clearly in Jameson's caution that we should never lose sight of our medieval roots. We may wonder, however, whose medieval roots and what medievalism is prompted by Jameson's discussion of allegory as *the* socio-symbolic form. Jameson makes only a passing reference to German fascism in *The Political Unconscious*, but this reference plays an important part in Jameson's argument. What he calls 'the renewal of interest in the nature of and dynamics of fascism'[20] demonstrates – as Jameson sees it – that 'all class consciousness of whatever type is utopian insofar as it expresses the unity of a collectivity; yet it must be added that this proposition is an allegorical one'.[21] Jameson's point is obscure, but it becomes less so if we understand that allegory is the means by which Jameson imports a dialectical model of subjectivity into his scheme. Allegory, in these terms, is the means by which victimized groups recognize themselves as such – that is, recognize themselves before the dominant or ruling class has identified its victims as a group.

This is all well and good, but why should the social critic 'wish to keep faith with [her/his] medieval precursor'? How can the medieval help us to 'restore a perspective in which the imagery of libidinal revolution and of bodily transfiguration once again becomes a figure for the perfected community'? We might say, borrowing the terms from Barthes, that the medieval is Jameson's *studium*, the discursive vehicle for his eagerness, while fascism is his *punctum*, the end of his speech. Within Jameson's scheme, fascism has a supplementary relationship with allegory, not a complementary relationship. One does not know what fascism is because one knows allegory; one knows fascism if one is fascist enough to enjoy *only* in the presence of the allegorized (the individual who must bear the burden of a group identity). For this reason, literary works that presume to 'represent evil' more often than not, make some reference to an historical or supposed historical source. We find this tension between history and art at work in Thomas Keneally's *Schindler's List*. Keneally writes in his preface that he may have used 'the texture and devices of a novel to tell a true story', but he wished 'to avoid all fiction, since fiction

[19] *The Political Unconscious*, p. 299.
[20] *The Political Unconscious*, p. 291, n. 10.
[21] *The Political Unconscious*, pp. 290–91.

would debase the record'.[22] Can we say the same of Jameson? Or of Snodgrass? That they have wished 'to avoid all poetry, since poetry would debase the record'?

No. An artist relies on historical records and the weight of history and memory only if she or he is writing about the survivors of the Nazi horror because it is presumed that the survivors are the only people who were silenced at the time of the horror but who are not silenced now. So, Snodgrass writes poems and assigns them to dead Nazis.[23] There is no question about whether these poems 'happened' or not. And Jameson saves 'ideological critique' by insisting that it leads us to conceive of a community of the victim(less). Neither Snodgrass's poems nor Jameson's 'allegories' are representations of something lost, or silenced voices; they are the invention/discovery of an evil that avoids representation simply by refusing to assume a position in current social discourses (historical, autobiographical, philosophical). What we need in order to find/discover this evil is art. Plato anticipated this view enough to exile all poets from his *Republic* – thinking that poets, then, were able to create evil on their own.[24]

In his remarkable 'Romanticism and Medievalism' Leslie Workman anticipates a good deal of this discussion concerning Jameson's medievalism. Although Workman does not address Jameson directly, he clearly identifies Jameson's intellectual climate, 'In the twentieth century, literature has replaced history at the head of the humanities. We do not think historically, and I do not yet see the New Historicism as an answer to this'.[25] Our discussion of Jameson and Snodgrass has shown how the opposition of literature/art and history has been reoriented as the problem of identifying/constructing a modern evil. So, let us resist the temptation to say that Jameson shows us the need to study medievalism and not simply practice it, that medievalism should provide medieval historians with an ideological skin to shed. Others can rescript the commonplace notion that good medieval history is history and that bad medieval history is medievalism. Workman's vision of medievalism asks more of us than that. Let us see in

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[22] Thomas Keneally, 'Preface', *Schindler's List* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), p. 10.

[23] Elsewhere, more in keeping with the poet's own thinking, I have identified Snodgrass's 'aesthetics of the imagined fact'. See David Metzger, 'Snodgrass and The Morality of History', in *Tuned and Under Tension: The Recent Poetry of W. D. Snodgrass*, ed. by Philip Raisor (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1998), pp. 187–203.

[24] Berel Lang's *Act and Idea in The Nazi Genocide* provides a thorough exposition of how the Holocaust challenges Plato's moral aesthetics; see especially chapter two.

[25] Leslie J. Workman, 'Medievalism and Romanticism', *Poetica* 39/49 (1994), 1–44, p. 28.

Jameson's medievalism, particularly his appeal to 'allegory', the need for historical thought –that is a way of historicizing that does not resolve questions of art and history to questions of Being/seeming. The student of medievalism can criticize Jameson for his history, but the force of that critique cannot be simply that 'Jameson gets it (our object) wrong; he hasn't read enough; he can't read Latin'. Workman's vision asks us to see how Jameson participates in medievalism that cannot distinguish itself from Romanticism. Workman asks us, though thankfully not for this essay, to see how the conflation of medievalism and Romanticism in Jameson's thought becomes the Medievalism-Orientalism of his later work.[26] Although these final statements move beyond this essay's specific argument, they do indicate that Workman's vision of medievalism is a discipline with its own 'philosophical identity', trajectory, and body of questions.

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[26] We take the following example from Jameson, 'Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital', *Social Text*, 5 (Fall 1986), 65–88 (p. 68): 'All third-world texts are necessarily, I want to argue, allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as what I will call national allegories'. For a critique of Jameson's use of allegory in this regard, see Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory* (London: Verso, 1992), pp. 95–122. The relationship of medievalism and Orientalism is just now being explored. See Desmond Harding, 'Edward Said's Theory of Orientalism and the Literature of the Crusades', *Medievalism as an Integrated Study*, ed. by David Metzger and Gwendolyn Morgan, *The Year's Work in Medievalism*, 9 (1994 (1997)), 175–90; see also Michael Bernard-Donals, 'Postcolonialism and Augustinian Allegory', *Medievalism and Cultural Studies*, ed. by Leslie J. Workman, Kathleen Verduin, and David Metzger, *Studies in Medievalism*, 10 (1998), forthcoming.

ROMANCING THE TEXT, MEDIEVALIZING THE BOOK

DAVID GREETHAM[1]

TEXT HAS ALWAYS BEEN a problem. From its first appearance in Middle English in the fourteenth century, the word has carried a dual, indeed a contradictory signification. Inherited from the late Latin *textus* was the sense of authority, of *the* text, the scripture, the revealed truth and unmoved centre of faith and transcendental reality; but parallel to, and competing with, this positivist acceptance of the singularity and invariability of *text* was another inherited strand of meaning, that which comes down to us in the word *textile*.[2] From its earliest etymological stirrings in both Greek and Latin,[3] *text* has carried a less precise and

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[1] This current essay is a companion piece to my 'Philosophical Discourse of [Textuality?]', *Reimagining Textuality*, ed. by Neil Fraistat and Elizabeth Loiseaux (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, forthcoming), which examines the philosophical and cultural underpinnings of the 'modern' as manifest in bibliographical and textual study, taking up the challenge of the arguments against postmodernism in Habermas's *Philosophical Discourse of Philosophy*. In that essay, I tentatively suggest that the theories of *text* espoused by the pre-modern (i.e., medieval) and the postmodern may have more in common with each other than they have with the intervening modern-ist view of *text* as authority and as definitive utterance. In a related study, 'Facts, Factoids, Truefacts, or Why Are They Still Saying Those Nasty Things about Epistemology', *The Text as Evidence: Revising Editorial Principles (A Hermeneutics of External Evidence)*, ed. Andrew Gurr, Special Issue of *Yearbook of English Studies* (1999), I link this modernist conception of *text* with empirical science, technological positivism, and the faith in a transcendental logic that is universally applicable.

[2] For an analysis of the complex etymology and meanings of *text*, see my '[Textual] Criticism and Deconstruction', *Studies in Bibliography*, 44 (1989), 1–24, repr. and rev. *Textual Transgressions: Essays toward the Construction of a Biobibliography* (New York: Garland, 1998), especially n19, together with the chapter on 'Ontology' in my *Theories of the Text* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). For a consideration of the confusion caused by postmodernist critics' generally being aware only of the *textile, network, weaving* strand of meaning, see my 'The Philosophical Discourse of [Textuality?]'.

[3] See Robert Scholes's essay, 'Canonicity and Textuality', in *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures*, ed. by Joseph Gibaldi, 2nd edn (New York: MLA, 1992), for an analysis of the developing meanings of *text* in Greek and Latin, and see Burt Kimmelman, *The Poetics of Authorship in the Later Middle Ages: The Emergence of the Modern Literary Persona* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), for a critical account of the late Latin use of *text* in the sense of 'authority'.

more epistemologically challenging sense than 'authority', a sense instead of a weave and pattern, a warp and weft, that threatens the stability of *quod scripsi scripsi* (John 19.22). Things can get un-said by an interdiction (*interdit*); the fixed pattern can come unthreaded and rewoven as latterday Penelopes continually remake the transmission.

For the most part, textual critics have not been unduly disturbed by this semantic and etymological aporia; in fact, they have pretty much ignored it. During the great period of positivist, definitive editing (especially that undertaken under the auspices of the Modern Language Association's Center for Editions of American Authors[4]), editors could take a proprietary responsibility for and delight in the 'clear-text', unsullied, newly pristine text-pages of the multivolume editions of the great canonical authors, while burying any possible evidence for unweaving discreetly and discretely in the back of the book.[5] The cognitive separation of what a medieval reader might have thought of as text and gloss was accomplished through the modernist technology of the printed codex book, that monument to stability and permanence. Thus, the modern agenda as exemplified in Ramus's famous oration, in which he declared that 'modern' (i.e., sixteenth-century) scholarship had now overcome the corruptions of the middle age, became not just a cultural trope but a hard, empirical, concrete exemplification, founded upon the twin altars of nationalism and positivism. Nationalism because of the need to fix the canonical status

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[4] The CEAA was set up by the MLA as a means of promoting the production of scholarly editions of the major writers of the American literary canon, and soon extended its influence into related fields, such as philosophy, though not into the editing of American historical writers, whose editors generally followed the principles set down by the National Historical and Public Records Commission (NHPRC). The theoretical conflict between the author-centred principles of CEAA and the annotational rationale of NHPRC is clearly set out in Don L. Cook's 'The Short, Happy Thesis of G. Thomas Tanselle', and in Robert Taylor's 'Editorial Practices – An Historian's View', both in the *Newsletter of the Association for Documentary Editing*, 3.1 (1981), 1–8, and both responding to G. Thomas Tanselle's 'The Editing of Historical Documents', *Studies in Bibliography*, 31 (1978), 1–56.

[5] A 'clear text' is one in which all signs of editorial intervention have been removed, and the apparatus of variants and editorial emendations is available only in a separate tabulation. One of the arguments put forward by the CEAA editions, almost all of which were in 'clear-text' form, was that having a pure text-page unencumbered by editorial stigmata would promote the dissemination of such texts in other formats. Perhaps the most successful of these recyclings of CEAA critical editions has been the Library of America, now approaching its one hundredth volume, of which the earlier in the series simply took their texts from established CEAA editions, but largely without the back-matter of editorial textual apparatus.

of the Great White Fathers[6] and positivism because these editions were perceived as the fulfilment of the nineteenth-century investment in analytical and descriptive bibliography[7] as part of a progressional history of technology in which, given enough testing and enough evidence, all textual truths would be known.[8] In this historical and evidentiary paradox, the textile aspects of text (the fragmentary and the apparently reweavable) were to be put in service of the idealist view of text as scripture, idealist in that it represented a 'text that never was' in this rude world of corruption and social negotiation.[9]

The further paradox, and one that is directly involved in the medievalising movement of the last two centuries, is that the Enlightenment, rationalist view of perfectable utterance (what

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[6] The CEAA enlarged its scope by becoming the Center on (later Committee for) Scholarly Editions, though to the present the major focus of the CSE's attentions and its awarding of 'approved' editions has remained in editions of nineteenth-century American authors. While some medievalists have served on the CSE (myself and the distinguished scholar of Old French, Mary B. Speer), the CSE has not been successful in getting editors of medieval works to submit to either the principles or the jurisdiction of MLA.

[7] Descriptive and analytical bibliography are closely linked and are at the heart of the Anglo-American bibliographical project. The former concentrates on the accurate, formulaic description of the physical features of the makeup of the printed book and the latter on the technological processes, from the compositorial setting of type to proofing, binding, and so on, that mark the printed book as an important exemplar of the history of technology. Descriptive and analytical bibliography have together emphasised the empirical, 'scientific' nature of the history of the book, sometimes at the expense of its cultural and social history, which has been favoured by French and other European bibliographers.

[8] The technological bias of Anglo-American bibliography can be seen as an aspect of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century confidence in the validity of impartial evidence in establishing historical 'fact'. For a critique of this faith in positivist and definitive appeals to evidence, see my 'Textual Forensics', *PMLA*, 111 (January 1996; Special Issue on the Status of Evidence), 32–51, and my 'Facts, Truefacts, Factoids, or, Why Are They Still Saying Those Nasty Things about Epistemology?' together with Lotte Hellinga's 'A Meditation on the Variety in Scale and Context in the Modern Study of the Early Printed Heritage', Annual lecture, Bibliographical Society of America, 23 January 1998, forthcoming in *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*.

[9] 'The text that never was' is a motto that emphasized the Anglo-American (and specifially Greg-Bowers) aim to restore an 'ideal' form of the text that had never seen actual documentary realisation. This call for an overcoming of the corrupting state of nature toward the resuscitation of a formalism beyond the reach of social and historical decay has been seen by some critics as a (neo)platonic idealism, as against the Aristotelian descriptivist and concrete documentalism of other approaches to the reconstruction of the past. See the 'Forms of the Text' chapter of my *Theories of the Text* for an analysis of the debate on textual platonism.

Habermas calls the 'ideal speech situation'[10]) finds its most potent distillation not in the neoclassical hopes for a grammar of textuality through a theory of more and more precisely defined genres but ironically in that 'individualistic' movement that supposedly put an end to genre theory and even textual taxonomy as a whole – Romanticism.[11] Where the Enlightenment (and even earlier periods) saw the medieval text as quaint and wilfully illegible (indeed, requiring legibility to be imposed on it, through normalisation and regularisation[12]), Romantic theories of textuality and the 'whole book' managed to combine an awe for the originary moment of inscription (in such cases as the supposed composition of Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* and Shelley's dictum about the 'fading coal' of inspiration once pen had been put to paper[13]) with new commitment to the organicism of a

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[10] See Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975), and 'Toward a Theory of Communicative Competence', in *Patterns of Communicative Behavior*, ed. by Hans Dreitzel (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 115–48, and, for the general Enlightenment and rationalist view of the possibilities of defining speech situations, see Habermas's *Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, *Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, trans. by Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984). I take up the textual issues in Habermas's defence of Enlightenment modernity in my 'Philosophical Discourse of [Textuality]?'.

[11] This ironic congruence of medievalism and Romanticism is most forcefully explored in Leslie Workman's essay 'Medievalism and Romanticism', (*Poetica* 39/49, 1–44), where he demonstrates that the scholarly momentum for medievalism as a whole (and as an identifiable intellectual discipline) is dependent on the Romantic reconfiguration of both history and aesthetics. I obviously endorse much of what Workman argues in this piece, but would complement his perspective by suggesting that, at least in textual studies, it is in *post*modernism that the medieval book (if not the medieval author) is fully resuscitated.

[12] See, for example, Dryden's 'modernisation' of Chaucer in his *Fables Ancient and Modern* (London: Tonson, 1700), and Thomas Percy's less overt but similarly motivated normalisation of some of the texts of his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). On the cultural and political co-option of major medieval texts in later periods see Tim William Machan, 'Speght's *Works* and the Invention of Chaucer', *TEXT*, 8 (1995), 145–70, and John Thompson, 'Textual Instability and the Late Medieval Reputation of Some Middle English Literature', *TEXT*, 5 (1991), 175–94.

[13] See Jack Stillinger, *Coleridge and Textual Instability: The Multiple Versions of the Major Poems* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), for a documentary and critical demonstration that, at least in the case of Coleridge, the Romantic ideal of single and originary inspiration was contradicted by the multiple reworkings of the poetry, including *Kubla Khan*, which, according to Coleridge, had been composed in an opium dream and interrupted by the famous visitor from Porlock before the poet could get the full vision onto paper. See also Jerome J. McGann, *A Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983; repr. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992), for an account of the ironies

totalised expression that could only be achieved under the impress of a powerful poetic Imagination acting upon otherwise recalcitrant material.[14] Allied to the commodification of the text that had already begun to be asserted by Locke, Defoe, and other promoters of literary proprietorship a century earlier,[15] Romanticism added the economic and cultural element of the poet as 'national treasure' to secure, through copyright, a legal as well as a philosophical protection of original and unitary utterance.[16]

As Jerome McGann and others have argued, it was this faith in Romantic individual expression (which was inherently sullied by the release of the text into society) that underwrote modernism's desire to reachieve the originary moment and to fix it against such latterday corruptions.[17] Romancing the text was a way to cordon off the incursions of bibliographical history and at the same time to situate the *author* as the prime, indeed the only, mover of literature. The

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implicit in this Romantic view of composition, especially as they become institutionalised in the modern 'critical' edition.

[14] See Coleridge's famous definition of poetry as the product of creative imagination: 'The poet, described in *ideal* perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity [...]. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) *fuses* each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination' (*Biographia Literaria* 14). See my 'The Telephone Directory and Dr. Seuss: Scholarly Editing after *Feist v. Rural Telephone*', *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 29 (1996) Special Issue on Editing the Literary Imagination, 53–74, for an exploration of how Coleridge's Romantic formulation has had a major influence on the history and protectability of the modern literary work, especially in Anglo-American copyright theory and practice.

[15] See Mark Rose, *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), for an account of the post-medieval growth of the concept of authorial intellectual property, deriving in part from Locke's economic theory of investment and profit in one's property. See also *Intellectual Property and the Construction of Authorship. Cardozo Arts & Entertainment Law Journal*, 10 (1992) for a wide range of important articles on the shift of attitudes to authorial control and responsibility in the post-medieval period. The seminal theoretical essay on the linking of authorial property with legal liability is, of course, Michel Foucault's 'What Is an Author?' in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. by Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984).

[16] On this concept, see Chris R. Vanden Bossche, 'The Value of Literature: Representations of Print Culture in the Copyright Debate of 1837–1842', *Victorian Studies*, 23 (1994), 41–68.

[17] McGann has written widely on this topic, but the major statement remains his *Critique of Modern Textual Criticism*. Tilottama Rajan questions McGann's thesis in a thoughtful essay, 'Is There a Romantic Ideology? Some Thoughts on Schleiermacher's Hermeneutic and Textual Criticism', *TEXT*, 4 (1988), 57–76.

modernist author thus took on the attributes of the medieval Creator, an unworldly absence who nonetheless left traces of his presence (his 'signatures') in the created universe of the text. Like the medieval Scholastic philosophers of the dialectic, it was accordingly the responsibility of textual critics as hermeneuts to make the connections between *signum* and *res*, to formulate anatomies or *summas* of text that could peer through what the New Bibliographers of the Anglo-American school termed a 'veil of print' into the mind of the great *auctor*.[18] As I have noted, once this idealising momentum, a reach for the true scriptures of *text*, could be attached to the manifest and incontestable epistemological truths of analytical and descriptive bibliography (a movement parallel to, or a part of, the charge of positivist science to discover the 'laws' of nature through empirical observation and rigorous evidentiary protocols), then modernist textuality appeared secure on both transcendental and empiricist fronts.

But this neat scenario and this seemingly impregnable case for a re-medievalised ideal text on the model of God's relations with his universe contained within itself the seeds of its own undoing, the *textile* threads that would now begin to re-medievalise the *book*, and thus to make the re-medievalised, Romanticised *text* give way before the later onslaught of that exemplary medieval bibliographical movement – postmodernism.

This was sometime a paradox, but has of late become almost a truism. For bibliographical and textual history, it plays out as follows. On one front the ideality of critical texts ran into a descriptive empiricism that increasingly concentrated on data without theory, the positive good of *information*. This movement is, for example, testified to in the founding of the Early English Text Society by Frederick Furnivall as a specific linguistic database for the provision of evidence for the *New* (later *Oxford*) *English Dictionary*. The *Dictionary* was the *raison d'être* for EETS because Furnivall rightly assumed that a full historical taxonomy of usage, morphology, and syntax could not be constructed authoritatively without the prior accession and codification of the documentary record from which the descriptive catalogue would

[18] For a succinct and informative survey of the of the cultural shift from medieval *auctor* to postmodern *scriptor*, see Donald E. Pease's essay, 'Author', *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, ed. by Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990). As I argue in the current essay, Pease sees the Romantic concept of originating *genius* as a return to the empowerment given to the Creator in medieval compositional theory. The central text in the postmodernist discourse of the *scriptor* is, of course, Roland Barthes's 'The Death of the Author', in *Image Music Text*, trans. by Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977).

be formulated.[19] Now, it is very tempting to argue that historicity is itself a theory of knowledge, a confidence in the ability of the researcher to arrange data on a linear path of developmental change that would demonstrate the linguistic ethic of origins and teleology. After all, the same (sometimes mistaken) confidence had led Mabillon to codify the scripts of Europe into developmental histories and had underwritten the exposure of documentary forgeries by Valla.[20] Put simply, the faith was that all aspects of cultural progression, while sometimes apparently arbitrary, seemed so only because we did not yet have a large enough database to perceive the orderliness of natural law: Grimm's Law, Verner's Law, and the like are 'laws' precisely because they are both predictive as well as descriptive; they can be used to fill in the blanks of the documentary record by demonstrating, through the minatory yet transcendental [*][21], what the missing part of the grid of evidence *would have been* if only it had had the good fortune not to have vanished (or conceivably, never to have been used). So while the evidentiary protocols of EETS were indeed inductive and descriptive as they related to the larger agenda of the *OED*, the lurking desideratum of the linguistic organic whole was never fully banished from the supposedly raw empiricist descriptive enterprise of both the editorial and the lexicographical projects. Besides, empiricism often seems to have a hard time amongst those looking to lexicography for a linguistic moral *summa* or for a code of social conduct, as witness the

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[19] As is well known, the EETS was largely a result of the historical, documentary rationale for the *OED*. See K. M. Elisabeth Murray's biography of the first editor of *OED*, James Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words: James Murray and the Oxford English Dictionary* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

[20] See Jean Mabillon, *De re diplomatica libri sex in quibus quidquid ad veterum instrumentorum antiquitatem, materiam, scripturam et stilum: quidquid ad sigilla, monogrammata, subscriptiones ac notas chronologicas; quidquid inde ad antiquariam, historicam, forensemque disciplinam pertinet, explicatur et illustratur*, 2nd. edn (Paris: Robustel, 1709), and Lorenzo Valla, *Declamatio: [Treatise of Lorenzo Valla on the Donation of Constantine]* (1440).

[21] By convention, an asterisk before a linguistic form acknowledges that no documentary record of the form has been discovered but that by the process of critical analogy, the asterisked form would morphologically and historically be *expected*. The inevitable evidentiary problem of such a synthetic complex is that it assumes a *totalisation* of utterance within a specific linguistic moment and space. Would the asterisked form still be justified ('a text that never was') if the conceptually implausible *negative* evidence could be assembled that the missing documentary evidence was missing not just because of the tenuous laws of survival of artifacts but because the putative form was, in fact, *never* used? It is a question of this type that the eclectic, idealist editors of modernism are continually confronting (except that the self-marking asterisk is often not present in their editions).

cultural brouhaha over *Webster's Third* having abandoned the moral labels of 'substandard' usage etc. in favour of historical description[22] and by that wonderful moment when James Murray was upbraided by a 'prim, decisive' female visitor to his Scriptorium for having included an entry in the *OED* for a 'non-existent' word, that is, one she did not already know: 'I am positive that I *never* saw that word before.' Murray's only proper empiricist rejoinder was via shared ignorance and cultural complicity–that he himself had also not encountered the word (and many others besides) before he began work on the dictionary. As Elisabeth Murray recounts, this anecdote illustrated to Murray the fact that 'not even one educated lady's English [or the English of the editor of *OED*] is all English.'[23]

The pretensions of the documentary record and the lexicographic coding of a culture toward completeness and toward the sort of organicist whole that Wordsworth and Coleridge claimed for the Romantic definition of poetic utterance could only ever be contingent, therefore, and inherently unstable in the real world of documentary representation. In this sense, the textual recovery of the medieval was forever similarly contingent and ephemeral. We do not even need to evoke studies of Klaeber's parochial 'Germanic' editing of *Beowulf*[24] or Allen Frantzen's exposure of the similarly nationalist programme for Anglo-Saxon studies[25] or John Willinsky's account of the nineteenth-century imperialist agenda of the *OED*[26] to acknowledge this contingency and partiality.

But the problem for organicist claims about text under Romanticism was compounded from within the bibliotextual establishment itself. Consider two very different cultural signifiers–

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[22] For the contention caused by this historicist and descriptive approach rather than the proscriptive and critical agendas of other American dictionaries, see Herbert C. Morton, *The Story of Webster's Third: Philip Gove's Controversial Dictionary and Its Critics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

[23] See Elizabeth Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words*, pp. 299–300.

[24] See Murray McGillivray, 'Creative Anachronism: Marx's Problem with Homer, Gadamer's Discussion of "the Classical", and Our Understanding of Older Literature', *New Literary History*, 25 (1994), 399–413, and see also Josephine Bloomfield's charge that Klaeber's patriarchal/paternalistic editing resulted in a 'diminished' Wealtheow ('Diminished by Kindness: Frederick Klaeber's Rewriting of Wealtheow', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, (1994), 183–203).

[25] See Allen J. Frantzen, *The Desire for Origins: New Language, Old English, and Teaching the Tradition* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991).

[26] See John Willinsky, *Empire of Words: The Reign of the OED* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

Robert Proctor's incunabular descriptive bibliography[27] and William Morris's bibliophiliac achievements at the Kelmscott Press.[28] It hardly matters that the former was motivated by a nationalist bibliography that can be traced back to John Bale and John Leland,[29] whereas the latter was a Marxist-inspired attempt to overcome the alienation between the artisan and the artifact, to reinstate *work* as *production* rather than as *hired labour*. Both projects tended toward the same breakup of the Romantic hegemony of remedievalised creation and authoriality, though both would presumably be horrified by the ultimate results. While Proctor's research into the bookishness of the book, its particularity and idiosyncrasy, was to be used in the service of the concept of *ideal copy* in descriptive bibliography,[30] the 'ideal' espoused by this aspect of bibliography, while still platonising, was procedurally far removed from the 'ideal text' of platonic *textual*

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[27] Robert Proctor, *An Index to the Early Printed Books in the British Museum: From the Invention of Printing to the Year 1500. With Notes of Those in the Bodleian Library*. (London: Holland, 1960).

[28] On Morris's medievalising aims for the Kelmscott, see his pamphlet, *A Note by William Moris on His Aims in Founding the Kelmscott Press* (1898; repr. 1969); for the production of the press see William S. Peterson's *Bibliography of the Kelmscott Press* (Oxford, 1984); for the political motivation behind the medievalisation of the artisan see E. P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (London: 1955; rev. edn, 1977), and Peter Faulkner, *Against the Age: An Introduction to William Morris*. Nicholas Salmon's essay, 'The Political Activist' in *William Morris*, ed. by Lynda Parry (London: Philip Wilson/Victoria and Albert Museum, 1996) provides a good survey of the ideological purposes behind Morris's various projects, and John Dreyfus's 'The Kelmscott Press' in the same volume demonstrates Morris's reworking of a pre-modern aesthetic in the age of mechanical reproduction.

[29] See Bale's *Illustrium majoris brittaniæ scriptorum summarium* (Wesel: Van den Staten, 1548), and *Leland's Joannis Lelandi antiquarii De rebvs britannicis collectanea* (London: White, 1774), and *The Laboryouse Journey and Serche of J. Leylande for Englandes Antiquities, Given of Hym as a Newe Gyfte to Kinge Henry the VIII* (1549).

[30] The concept of 'ideal copy' is central to the research aims of descriptive and analytical bibliography. The term is defined by Philip Gaskell as 'the most perfect state of a work as originally intended by its printer or publisher following completion of all intentional changes' (*A New Introduction to Bibliography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972, p. 321); repr. with corrections, 1985) and in similarly intentionalist language by G. Thomas Tanselle, who notes that ideal copy excludes 'alterations that occurred in individual copies after the time when those copies ceased to be under the control of printer or publisher' ('The Concept of Ideal Copy', *Studies in Bibliography*, 33 (1980), 46). Thus intentionality (printer's and publisher's) is as much part of the rationale of the apparently 'technical' or 'scientific' aspects of 'strict and pure' bibliography as it is in the recovery of unfulfilled authorial intention under the auspices of idealist, eclectic editing.

theory,[31] although there has been some cultural irony in the two procedures having often been practised by the same bibliographers, notably W. W. Greg, Fredson Bowers, and G. Thomas Tanselle.[32] In brief, by Proctor and his followers having placed the hard physicality of the *book* at the centre of bibliographical identity, the transcendence of author (and therefore of authorial *text*) beyond the constricting confines of analytical bibliography made it increasingly difficult to sustain the author-focussed centripetal ideology of the 'great' and 'unique' creator (the unmoved mover) in the face of the centrifugal ideology of bibliographical fragmentalism. For the medieval book, this undermining of Romantic authoriality was particularly stark, since the tendency of medieval codex-production to be only rarely in the service of the singularity of the author (but instead to favour what Derek Pearsall has referred to as a 'history of taste',[33] in other words, the *receptional* antithesis of individual *composition*) meant that the study of the artifactual history of books under the auspices of analytical bibliography and codicology would tend to reinforce the structuralist, non-intentionalist, culturally degressive assumptions of *l'histoire du livre*, itself a manifestation of the *annales* school of history versus the 'great-figure' approach more favoured by Anglo-American historians and bibliographers.[34]

Similarly, Morris's 'liberation' bibliography, while obviously nostalgic in its imitations of medieval scripts and medieval book-

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[31] For an account of the platonising idealism of 'modern' textual criticism, see the 'Forms of the Text' chapter of my *Theories of the Text*. It has long been my contention that this modern platonism is a cognitive inheritor of the principles of *analogy* used by the Alexandrian librarians and Homeric editors of the 3rd century B. C. See, for example, my textual elucidation of Harold Bloom's argument on 'canny' Alexandrianism versus 'uncanny' Pergamanian *anomaly* (Bloom: 'The Breaking of Form', in *Deconstruction and Criticism* (New York: Continuum, 1979)) in my essays '[Textual] Criticism and Deconstruction', *Studies in Bibliography*, 44 (1991), 1–30, and 'Factoids, Facts, Truefacts'.

[32] See my 'Materiality of Textual Editing', in *Textual Transgressions: Essays toward the Construction of a Biobibliography* (New York: Garland, 1998), for an examination of these ironies and their cultural significance for the history of bibliography and textual criticism.

[33] Derek Pearsall, 'Editing Medieval Texts', *Textual Criticism and Literary Interpretation*, ed. by Jerome J. McGann (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 105.

[34] French *l'histoire du livre* has typically dealt with the phenomenon of the book as a cultural artifact and with the cognitive and social implications of its 'bookishness'. A disdainfully acid response to this approach (as seen from an entrenched Anglo-American 'bibliographical' disposition) occurs in David Shaw's '*La bibliologie* in France', *The Book Encompassed: Studies in Twentieth-Century Bibliography*, ed. by Peter Davison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

production in general, might have been motivated by a Marxist desire for the reintegration of artifact and artificer but itself became a particularly overt example of a growing concern for what Jerome McGann has subsequently dubbed the 'bibliographical codes' of textual meaning, those graphic signifiers that have little or no lexical variation but can determine major cognitive and receptional variance in the cultural signification of a work.[35] Words may remain consistent, but meaning changes according to the graphic phenomena in which the words are represented. The challenge that Kelmscott, Doves, Ashendene, and other 'private' presses apparently resuscitating medieval bibliographic codes offered to authorial textual idealism was twofold. First, the private presses produced medievalised cultural *simulacra*, not the thing itself–they specialised in the manufacture of medieval*ism*, not in the constitution of an essentialist, platonised, and historically plausible medieval bibliographic ethic. Second, they emphasised that a belated bibliographic control over the means of production could significantly open up an experiential gap between author and work, and thus make the claims for a transcendental authoriality yet more difficult to sustain. None of this was, I believe, observed at the time: Morris did not believe he was rendering Chaucer *less* medieval by drawing attention to the simulacra of bibliographical codes in the Kelmscott edition; but the effects of Kelmscott were to make Chaucer Victorian, not medieval, and were done so by Morris's very skill at creatively emulating his cultural paradigms to emphasise the constructed quality of the Chaucerian text. So much for textual transcendentalism.

But the situation was to become yet more fraught with bibliotextual ironies. It has (I hope) become a critical commonplace that textual criticism and bibliographical research are no more immune to the ideological and theoretical shifts that characterise the academy and society at large than is any other intellectual procedure. As I and various other historians of the book and the text have pointed out, the complex and evolving narrative of nineteenth- and twentieth-century critical theory, from (old) historicism through formalism through phenomenology, structuralism, poststructuralism, (new) historicism, feminism, and the rest, can be mapped in the changing dispositions, aims, and principles of bibliography, and even in the physical layout and appearance of the artifactual and scholarly products of the discipline. Thus, clear-text idealism may be seen as a manifestation of the 'well-wrought urn' of the culturally isolated and artistically self-referential modes of Russian Formalism and Anglo-American New

[35] See McGann, 'What Is Critical Editing?' *TEXT*, 5 (1991), 15–30. Repr. in *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

Criticism,[36] whereas genetic or inclusive-text editions owe more to structuralist principles of textual analysis (and it is therefore no great cultural surprise to discover that genetic editions are to this day more popular in France and Germany, where the philosophical roots of structuralism began, than in the Anglo-American textual community, which until very recently still overwhelmingly regarded the formalist principles of New Criticism as the talisman of textual production).[37] Admittedly, there has been some resistance among Anglo-American empiricists and positivists to this revelation that there really is a *theory* behind textual practice (indeed, several, often competing, theories), and the naively neutral motto of 'doing what comes naturally' has not been easy to *de*naturalise.[38] Nonetheless, when Lotte Hellinga, a renowned scholar of the analytical bibliography of incunabula (and in a direct line of intellectual and procedural descent from Proctor, Burger, Duff, Haebler, and Holtrop,[39] and other researchers in the medieval and early modern book), can argue that bibliographical 'facts' are inherently unstable, for they will change their significance depending on the size (micro or macro) of the map or grid on which the data are observed,[40] then I think we can perceive that the most

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[36] See my 'Forms of the Text' chapter in *Theories of the Text* for a fuller explication of this collocation.

[37] See my 'Textual Imperialism and Postcolonial Bibliography', in *Textual Transgressions: Essays toward the Construction of a Biobibliography* (New York: Garland, 1998), for an account of such nationalist (pre)judices in editorial theory and see the 'History of the Text' chapter of *Theories of the Text* for a coverage of the struggle for hegemony between Anglo-American and European schools. My general argument has been that such gestures as G. Thomas Tanselle's 'From Bibliography to *Histoire Totale*: The History of Books as a Field of Study' (*Times Literary Supplement*, 5 June 1981, 647–49, repr. as *The History of Books as a Field of Study*. Second Hanes Lecture (Chapel Hill: Hanes Foundation/University of North Carolina, 1981)) have been 'imperialist' manoeuvres to co-opt or contain foreign (and specifically French) theories of the book with the 'big tent' of Greg-Bowers eclecticism.

[38] See Hugh Amory, 'Physical Bibliography, Cultural History, and the Disappearance of the Book', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 78 (1984), 341–48.

[39] See, for example, Proctor; Konrad Burger, *Monumenta Germaniæ et Italiæ typographica* (Berlin: 1892–1913); Gordon E. Duff, *Early English Printing [...] Facsimiles of All Types Used in England During the XV Century* (London: Kegan Paul, 1886; repr. New York: B. Franklin, 1970); J. W. Holtrop, *Monuments typographiques des Pays-Bas au quinzième siècle* (Paris: 1857–68). 24 vols, all of them distinguished precursors to Hellinga's work on incunabula.

[40] For example, Hellinga, speaking out of not only her experience as a scholar of incunabula but also her role as coordinator of the European consortium on the records of early printing, demonstrates that a 'fact' like a simple list of publications from a particular town or press will change its significance when anachronistic 'modern' national borders are imposed over a cultural landscape that was configured very

thoughtful and influential of contemporary bibliographers[41] have successfully denaturalised the study of the book and the text in their own work, and are now striving to persuade the last holdouts of recalcitrant positivist bibliography that 'facts' are moveable and constructable cultural phenomena, not transcendental (and Romantic) mystical entities.

Nobody could accuse Dr. Hellinga of being a bibliographical postmodernist, but her deft demonstration of how the particulars of historical research may be reordered (at what Barthes would call secondary and tertiary systems of signification[42]) effectively challenges the earlier (modernist) bibliographical faith in essentialism and the 'purity' of the various manifestations of knowledge and expression. To that extent, therefore, Dr. Hellinga's more flexible, more cautious *and* more provocative, use of those slippery pieces of information we call 'facts', does demonstrate that her thinking is of its time and context. And that time and context, like it or not, is postmodernist.

And hereby hangs an inevitable conceptual and historical hermeneutic circle. Clearly, any of the various 'post-'disciplines and ideologies (poststructuralism, postmarxism, postfeminism, postcolonialism) depends for its function and identity on the idea of *supersession*, and specifically a supersession of an earlier, more essentialist discipline. To come after and to celebrate that belatedness by the marker 'post' is to claim that a former, self-referential and enclosed critical method or social philosophy (enclosed because it did not denominate itself by reference to another, through such prefixes as 'post') has been superseded and is now a matter of historical curiosity but no longer a viable ethical, intellectual, or cultural force for the *production* of contemporary discourse. And now consider 'post/modernism' under this template, especially with regard to the gap between the 'modern' and the 'post' as it affects our current concepts of, and work in, the book and the text, and specifically the

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differently. She notes, for example, that the obsession with 'Costeriana' (those print artifacts that have been used by Dutch book historians to suggest that the Netherlands has bragging rights for the invention of printing, rather than Germany, via Gutenberg) take on an entirely different function as 'facts' when they are observed within a contemporary political landscape in which the national identities of 'Germany' and 'The Netherlands' were completely unlike those in the later period when the international historical contention began.

[41] See, for example, G. Thomas Tanselle's very sophisticated analysis of the problem of historical fact in his 'Printing History and Other History', *Studies in Bibliography*, 48 (1995), 269–89.

[42] See Barthes's analysis of the relations between orders of discourse in his essay 'Myth Today', in *Mythologies*, trans. by Annette Lavers (New York: Noonday, 1972).

book and text as 'medieval*ised*' (or even actually 'medieval') objects of study. In brief, what does a 'postmodern' bibliography and textuality look like and how do such views impinge upon our reconceptualisation of the 'medieval'?

One of the major ironies in the academic and scholarly renomination of the 'Renaissance' as the 'Early Modern' (even leaving aside the fact that 'Renaissance' itself was not a renaissance invention, but was back-constructed in the nineteenth century to justify and underwrite the Enlightenment and Romantic rehistoricising of the past[43]) is that, with 'pre-' and 'post-' now enclosing it, modernity is arrested in time, made an object of historical study, and demarcated against both its precursor and successor.[44] Thus the 'pre-modern' (i.e., that which was formerly the 'medieval') and the 'post-modern' must now be seen as definable not only by what they are *not* ('modern') but by their structuralist affinities *with each other* by this bipolar opposition to the intermediary period and dispensation. At its crudest chronological remapping, modernity thus becomes merely a blip, an interruption, in the connectivity of the pre- and postmodern, between medieval and contemporary culture.

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[43] In the sense (1. a.) of the 'great revival of art and letters, under the influence of classical models, which began in Italy in the 14th century and continued during the 15th and 16th; also, the period during which this movement was in progress' *OED*'s earliest citations are from the mid-nineteenth century. And perhaps ironically, while this general sense was usually positive (*OED* cites a first instance in Ford's *Handbook of Spain* (1842): '[a]t the bright period of the *Renaissance*, when fine art was a necessity and pervaded every relation of life'), the attributive senses associated with, say, architecture, were often quite pejorative, as in the T. A. Trollope first citation from *Summer in Brittany* (1840): '[t]hat heaviest and least graceful of all possible styles, the 'renaissance' as the French choose to term it' or Jephson & Reeve's *Brittany* (1859): '[t]he cathedral front is a huge mass of barbarous Renaissance'. But for a period that oversaw not only the historical 'invention' of the Renaissance but also the Romantic reinstitution of the Gothic (and pseudo-Gothic) as an architectural aesthetic, this irony is almost predictable.

[44] The historical range of what is meant by the 'modern' is itself a matter of dispute, and thus affects the values ascribed to the 'pre' and 'post' modern. For example, Habermas's version of 'die Moderne' is coterminous with Enlightenment rationality at one end and the breakdown of this same rationality under the auspices of Foucault, Derrida, et al., whereas Stephen Toulmin (*Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990)) pushes back the 'modern' as a philosophical dialectic substituting a) logic for rhetoric, b) the universal for the particular, c) the general for the local, and d) the timeless for the timely: in other words, as Platonic rather than Aristotelian. See my 'Philosophical Discourse of [Textuality]?' for a discussion of the implications of this dialectic for modern, premodern, and postmodern editing and textual practice.

This effacement of modernity and reintegration of the medieval and postmodern has, of course, been one of the main features of that remedievalising associated with the work of Umberto Eco, especially in his influential essays on 'rediscovering' the Middle Ages[45] and in his rereading, in *The Name of the Rose*,[46] of contemporary semiotic theory within or parallel to the medieval (specially Lombardian) hermeneutic interplay between *signum* and *res*, together with a replaying of the nominalist/universalist battles of Abelard and William of Champeaux[47] in the context of a poststructuralist play on the infinite deferral of *différance* as against the sureties of modernist, structuralist *différence*.[48]

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[45] Eco, 'The Return to the Middle Ages', in *Travels in Hyperreality*, trans. by William Weaver (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1986). See also Eco and others, *Il nouvo medioevo* (Milan: Bompiani, 1973).

[46] Eco, *The Name of the Rose*, trans. by William Weaver. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983).

[47] See my 'Philosophical Discourse of [Textuality]?' for a further examination of the textual implications of nominalism and universalism.

[48] That is, the evidentiary protocols of the 'detective-story' genre of Eco's novel appear to play into the semiotics of structuralist *différence* (the detective observes a *sign* that can then be interpreted as a demonstration of inferrable 'fact' leading to the establishment of the bipolarities of 'guilt' or 'innocence'). Indeed, the usual structure of the detective novel is built on a series of 'misreadings' of signs (by the reader and/or by other characters in the story), a structure that is necessary for the plot, in its most basic Aristotelian sense, to advance by a progression of such 'differences' between, and misapprehensions of, *truth* and *error*, the prototype being, of course, *Oedipus Rex*. Structuralist *différence* is thus resolved into the full system of *signification* that typically concludes the detective novel, where the 'private eye' explains how the complex of signs can all be fulfilled by the necessary narrative closure. However, as I argue in 'Philosophical Discourse of [Textuality]?', this apparent triumph of Enlightenment, 'modern' rationality is an illusion common to all idealist philosophies, and the dialectical confrontation with the text that Habermas and other modernists strive after is an incomplete or weak dialectic, one in which the 'negative' component of the dialectic is not 'negative' enough. I contend that the implied simultaneity of the *et* in Abelard's *sic et non*, while it might appear to be in the service of structuralist resolution (like that of the detective story in Eco's novel), when read in its fuller postmodernist implications in the work of, say, Adorno and Horkheimer, becomes instead the precursor for the deeper cynicism of continually deferred resolution (*différance, avant la lettre*) of Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* (trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 1992)). I claim that it may be plausible to regard Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947) as a 'modern' equivalent of the systemics of Abelard's *Sic et Non* (in the suggestion that the pursuit of enlightened reason might produce new forms of irrationality), and that both pre- and postmodernism might move the irrational to another stage of development, resisting affirmative thought in any mode. Abelard's dialectic, because it gave prominence to the act of opposition, might thus look irrational to an Early Modern (or later modernist) but could at least point toward synthesis as an operational, if not a 'real',

Eco has, indeed, become perhaps the chief apologist for and scholiast on the text that declares a *new* Middle Ages in postmodernism,[49] rather than yet another reconstitution of a medieval*ism* (after the model of, say, gothicism, Romanticism, Wagnerism or Victorianism) that is simply a selective and ultimately distancing reconstitution of certain emotionally or politically attractive features of a retroactively invented 'middle' age.[50]

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resolution. By the time we reach Adorno's *Negative Dialectics*, however, the act of affirmation in both parts of the Abelardian contradictions (as well as the imputed synthesis) becomes untenable. For example, in his 'Critique of Positive Negation' Adorno confronts the 'mathematical' bias in Hegel's formulation of the dialectic ('to equate the negation of negation with positivity is the quintessence of identification' (158)) as a 'fetish' of 'the positive-in-itself' (159). Like Abelard, who recognised the realist error of thinking of categories or classes as things ('It is monstrous to predicate the thing of a thing' [qtd. Gordon Leff, *Medieval Thought: St. Augustine to Ockham* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958), p. 109), Adorno addresses the issue of the *quidditas* ('whatness' of identity) as fetishistic: 'Against this [fetish], the seriousness of unswerving negation lies in its refusal to lend itself to sanctioning things as they are. To negate a negation does not bring about its reversal; it proves, rather, that the negation was not negative enough' (Adorno 159–60). Because resolution, on the detective-story model, can never be fully achieved in medieval theology or philosophy (we must await the revealed and singular truth of the next, transcendental world for that happy state), Adorno's refusal of modernist dialectic is, perhaps paradoxically, much more 'medieval' (and thus postmodernist) than any structuralist closure could attain.

[49] The qualities that Eco recognises in this *nuovo medioevo* include 'the collapse of the Great Pax' (75); a 'new barbarianism' (76); the 'insecurity [...] of chiliastic anxieties' (79); 'politicized groups whose moralism has monastic roots' (80); the verbal élite's translation of an 'alphabetic mentality [...] into images [of] the essential data or knowledge and the fundamental structure of the ruling ideology' (81); 'the work of composition and collage that learned culture is carrying out on the flotsam of past culture' (82); and 'an art not systematic but additive and compositive.' As I note in the critique of Eco's formulation I offer in 'The Philosophical Discourse of [Textuality]?', for the textual historian, it is the formal shift from a 'systematic' textuality to an 'additive and compositive' one that best illustrates the conflation of pre- and postmodern aesthetics.

[50] As is well-known, Wagner added the paean to German art and to the unifying status of the specifically *German* Holy Roman Empire (together with the warnings against the dangers of falling under the corrupting influence of a 'falscher wälscher Majestät') at the end of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* partly at the promptings of the ultra-nationalist Cosima and partly as the fulfilment of his project to promote a new German identity founded upon the resuscitation of a Germanic Middle Ages ultimately to find modern embodiment after 1871 in the new German Empire. This project is just one aspect of the re-formation of *Germanistik* under the protocols of *Modernismus* initiated by the philological and *völkisch* agenda of the Grimm brothers. See Jeffrey

Whether or not Eco will succeed in his agenda for reperiodisation (and ironically, to recast the period of Habermas's 'modernity' as the *next* 'Middle Ages' between the pre- and postmodern), there have been various signs of late that bibliographers and textual critics may be playing into Eco's model, by emphasising the cognitive and even the physical or narrative codes of 'medieval' and 'postmodern' textualism, a sympathetic alignment that reflects the similar nostalgic or apocalyptic agenda of much current work in 'new' medievalism as an academic discipline.[51] It is true that those supersessionist enthusiasts for electronic texts (what I like to call 'pomo romanticists') who are ignorant of the long history of bibliography still tend to lump the medieval manuscript 'book' and its texts and readers together with the printed book of the post-Gutenberg period, and in so doing betray their simplistic and unsophisticated (mis)understandings of both medieval bibliography *and* of the very hypertextualism they now wish to espouse. But a more careful reading of bibliographical history, one that does not simply attempt a 'year zero' rejection of all that came before the new revealed truth of hypertextualism, can both clarify and illustrate the drawing together of the medieval and the postmodern, to form an arc (even perhaps a full circle) of bibliographical coding, whereby the conceptual principles of the textualism of the (old) Middle Ages can be fulfilled in the new episteme of the postmodern and the hypertextual. If this linking is plausible, then we may have progressed beyond the earlier 'romancing' of the *text* as a form of remedievalisation to a 'medievalising' of the *book* at a moment of one the major transmissional opportunities (or crises) of the last few millennia.[52]

M. Peck, '"In the Beginning Was the Word": Germany and the Origins of German Studies', in *Medievalism and the Modernist Temper*, ed. by R. Howard Bloch and Stephen G. Nichols (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996) for an account of this identification between philology, *Altertumswissenschaft*, and the concept of a 'new' (i.e., 'medieval') Germany. It was, of course, no accident that the Nazis later chose Nuremberg as the contested site for the celebration of this newly 'primitive' Germany.

[51] See, for example, Bloch and Nichols's introductory account of this alignment in *Medievalism and the Modernist Temper*, especially the emphasis on the late-nineteenth-century's medievalists' 'ambiguous relation to what they saw as the insidious modernism of the times as opposed to an earlier modernism of Newton and Descartes' (11). See further in Nichols' essay in the same collection, 'Modernism and the Politics of Medieval Studies'.

[52] If earlier moments in such cultural crises of transmission are any guide, the shift from print to electronic modes of production will act as a major epistemological, literary, and scholarly filter, through which only a small percentage of the

Much has been made by pomo romanticists of the forbidding, constrained finality and linearity of the print codex book, especially as compared with the 'liberation technology' of electronic text. Even leaving aside the political naivety of these claims for an open inclusiveness and democratisation as against protected and privileged access to a social elite; and even allowing the claims for electronic nonlinearity to stand unchallenged for the moment (though such preconceptions betray a remarkable ignorance of the cognitive psychology of reading),[53] let us concentrate primarily on the 'pomo romantic' ignorance of book history. To my knowledge, no hypertextual enthusiast has even acknowledged some of the basic formal distinctions in the format of the printed book (never mind the textual interplay of the medieval manuscript). The hypertextuists do not observe that broadsheet, codex, and roll (to take just three bibliographical examples) require entirely different acts of composition, layout, and reading. Instead, the pomo romanticists take only the late (nineteenth- to twentieth-century) unannotated, narrative codex as their *bête noir* and extract their rules of linearity from this very limited model.

As Jerome McGann has noted, there are several other protocols of reading that can inform even the print codex, including what he calls 'radial' as well as 'linear' reading.[54] Moreover, the pomo romanticists seem entirely innocent of the complex intertextual relations of, for example, shoulder notes, footnotes, embedded notes, end notes, marginal and completely enclosing notes (or combinations of all

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documentary artefacts of the current medium will fully survive into the next. The precedent shifts from orality to literacy, from epigraphy to the roll, from roll to manuscript codex, and then from script to print, have all entailed critical (and sometimes quite accidental) losses. The example of the only documentary witness to Cicero's *De Republica* surviving as the lower text in a palimpsest of Augustine's *In Psalmos* is simply a useful token of the strategic significance of the cumulative decisions of all those participating in the cultural criticism that is embodied in these shifts.

[53] For a futher account of 'pomo romanticism' see my essays 'The Function of [Textual] Criticism at the Present Time', in *Voice, Text, and Hypertext at the Millennium*, ed. by Raimonda Modiano, Leroy Searle, and David Greetham (Seattle: University of Washington Press, forthcoming), and 'Is It Morphin Time?' in *Electronic Text*, ed. by Kathryn Sutherland (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

[54] On 'radial' reading, see McGann, 'How to Read a Book', in *New Directions in Textual Studies*, ed. by Dave Oliphant and Robin Bradford (Austin: Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center/University of Texas Press, 1990).

these) in the bibliography of the printed book:[55] to them and their supersessionist cause, where the 'book' must be swept away as a cultural anachronism, even a moral danger to society, all books are clear-text narratively encoded codices with entirely fixed Aristotelian beginnings, middles, and ends. Alexander Pope's play within, among, and across the supposedly fixed and separate entities of *text* and *gloss*[56] would be completely lost on those determined to find only linearity in the printed book. Now, if we extend our own bibliographical reach into the 'pre-modern', we will immediately find that the fixed linearity and enclosed and static narrative arrangement that hypertextuists ascribe to the 'book' becomes the aberration rather than the norm. As scholars from Paul Needham on bindings to Barbara Shailor on makeup and Leonard Boyle on gatherings[57] have convincingly demonstrated, the medieval book, even in what looks like the severely constraining form of the codex, is in both composition and reception, a fluid, unstable, and constantly shifting series of entities, rather than the solid edifice imagined by the hypertextuists. If anything, various features of the medieval *book* (perhaps more accurately designated as the medieval *intertext*), foreshadow the multiple links, the shifting levels of reading, the complex negotiations among different *lexias*[58] of

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[55] On the history and spatial, cognitive, and political function of various styles of marginalia and annotation, see *Margins of the Text*, ed. by D. C. Greetham (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997) and *Annotation and Its Texts*, ed. by Stephen Barney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), and the references therein.

[56] See, for example, James McLaverty, 'The Mode of Existence of Literary Works of Art: The Case of the *Dunciad* Variorum', *Studies in Bibliography*, 37 (1984), 82–105, and Peter W. Cosgrove, 'Undermining the Text: Edward Gibbon, Alexander Pope, and the Anti-Authenticating Footnote', in *Annotation and Its Texts*.

[57] See, for example, Leonard E. Boyle, OP. '"Epistulae Venerunt Parum Dulces": The Place of Codicology in the Editing of Medieval Latin Texts', in *Editing and Editors: A Retrospect*, ed. by Richard Landon (New York: AMS Press, 1988), Paul Needham, *Twelve Centuries of Bookbindings: 400–1600* (New York: Pierpont Morgan Library/Steinhour Press, 1979), and Barbara A. Shailor, *The Medieval Book* (New Haven: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, 1988; repr. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991, in association with Medieval Academy of America). For additional references to the impact of codicology on textual analysis, see the bibliographies to the 'Textual Bibliography' and 'Making the Book: Manuscript Books' chapters of my *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction* (New York: Garland, 1992; rev. repr. 1994).

[58] The term *lexia* (for a 'reading unit' of a text) is associated with Roland Barthes's having divided Balzac's novel, *Sarrasine*, into a series of non-linear taxemes that have the effect of breaking up the narrative of the novel according to a (post)structuralist ethic (*S/Z: An Essay*, trans. by Richard Miller (New York: Noonday, 1974)). George Landow then adopts Barthes's term to describe what he perceives to be the similar dismemberment of the linear, print book in the new electronic environment of

the text(s) characteristic of electronic hypertextuality. A typical Aristotle university textbook of the twelfth century would only *begin* with the concept of a central text, on which the layout of the page would then encourage, in fact *demand* that multiple layers of annotation and response be 'downloaded' into the expanding text by multiple 'end-users'. The very form of the textual organisation was predicated on the concept of texts upon texts upon texts, with the eye (and probably the finger) of the textual manipulator of the page and the volume having no preordained or sequential linearity as a single paradigm in making the text(s) legible. Each end-user could construct a labyrinth or 'web' of reading negotiations that might never be replicated exactly by another user. The major phenomenological difference between the mapping of a medieval (manuscript) and a postmodern (electronic) intertext of something like those Aristotle textbooks is that the electronic medium will usually record the progress of the reader through the links so that by hitting the 'back' button or consulting the 'history' of hypertext 'pages' one can give linear presence to a process that is, and always was, inaccessible to the medieval reader. It is not pushing the bibliographical features too far, I believe, to suggest that medieval reading of Aristotle was quite as weblike, intertextual, and radial as a current encounter with such popular opaque metafictions as *Myst*.

Then, if we turn from the local unit of the textual *page* to the yet more complex and unstable phenomenology and cultural artifactuality of the *book* we will see that the pomo romantic view of codex linearity evaporates almost entirely. As is well known and well documented (by medievalist codicologists if not by hypertext enthusiasts), the medieval *book* is almost a complete misnomer if by that term we mean a stable, uniform, unchanging *string* (rather than *web*) of textual relations. When I first began editing the geographical sections of Bartholomaeus Anglicus' *De Proprietatibus Rerum*, one of the first (and at that point alarming) features of the Latin exemplars from which John Trevisa drew his Middle English text was that these geographical sections were, well, very 'mobile'. Sometimes they were missing from the encyclopaedia as a whole (presumably removed by interested armchair tourists) and sometimes they existed as independent pamphlets (possibly for the same reason). The text *moved*. I did not realise it then, but this continued mobility and interchangeability, both within a supposed *work* and within the codex collection in which that work was

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hypertext (*Hypertext: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992; electronic edition, 1993)).

enshrined, was testimony to the permeability of the textual and bibliographic membranes (and I use the pun with all of its connotations and denotations) that typically went into the *ordinatio* and *compilatio* of the medieval intertext, best represented not by the word *book* but by the various contemporary terms used to suggest this fragmentation and permeability–*collectanea*, *florilegia*, *franciplegius*, *pecia*, and so on.

Yes, in the later Middle Ages, there were some attempts by vernacular authors to gather and 'control' their texts into a sort of 'collected works'. The best example in English is probably Thomas Hoccleve, who did manage to collect various fugitive pieces and even to construct an interlocking (but highly ironic and perplexing) internarrative to bind some of these works together into the so-called *Series* poems.[59] But then Hoccleve was a professional scribe and thus in a privileged position to effect this ordering of parts (much like Pope's activities as self-publisher 300 years later). And even Hoccleve failed to get his acknowledged *magnum opus*, the *Regement of Princes*, into the 'collected works', and it thus exists only in corrupted, nonauthorial, scribal versions. There has been some argument that, a generation earlier, Chaucer might have been trying to construct a linear and enclosed collected works, but his control over this venture (if it ever really got off the ground) was limited at best, and his attitude to textual transmission is probably more accurately displayed by his famous polemic against the depredations of scribes, in his poem, *To Adam Scriveyn*.

> Adam scriveyn, if ever it thee bifalle
> Boece or Troylus for to wryten newe,
> Under thy long lokkes thou most have the scalle,
> But after my makyng thow wryte more trewe;
> So ofte adaye I mot thy werk renewe,
> It to correcte and eke to rubbe and scrape,
> And al is thorough thy negligence and rape.

As virtually all responsible codicologists and most historians of the medieval book have long recognised, the proportion of medieval texts

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[59] See J. A. Burrow, 'Autobiographical Poetry in the Middle Ages: The Case of Thomas Hoccleve', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 63 (1982), 389–412; together with Burrow's 'Hoccleve's *Series*: Experience and Books', *Fifteenth-Century Studies: Recent Essays*, ed. by R. F. Yeager (Hamden, CT: Archon, 1984), 259–73, and my 'Self-Referential Artifacts: Hoccleve's Persona as a Literary Device', *Modern Philology*, 86 (1989), 242–51, all of which consider the authorial and compositional ironies in Hoccleve's attempt to construct a 'collected works' that will somehow reflect his complex and often unstable sense of the self.

that remain in their original bindings[60] is tiny compared to the total book production, and the incidence of a specific text always having the same bibliographical disposition either internally or with other texts bound in the same volume is very slight. Indeed, such a permanent (and linear) coherence may turn out to be non-existant.

So what conclusions may we draw from this bibliographical interface of the pre- and postmodern, and from the hypertextuists' typical conflation of all forms and representational systems of the codex book? Apart from the inevitable *Schadenfreude* in the castigation of faulty history and unsophisticated thinking (always a critical pleasure to indulge in), one may observe that the terminological poles of the 'pre' and the 'post' modern may have peculiar validity in the realm of bibliography and book history, and that it might behoove the self-nominated postmodernists of electronic text to be aware of this. If they are not, if they continue to ignore the medieval precursors for their 'newfound' webs and hypertextualities, they will continue to be guilty of yet another Romanticism. After the authorial transcendentalists of the Enlightenment and the Romantic periods consummated the power, integrity, and ubiquity of the literary creator on the model of the Godhead (even down to the principles of legal enshrinement and protection of that entity), the postmodern transcendentalists may have re-romanticised the *text*, this time as the ineffable, indeterminate, and finally unknowable deity. And they may do this without realising that in fact they are fulfilling an epistemological program, a way of textual *knowing*, that is in effect a re-medievalisation of the *book*, but the book now conceived not under the modernist principles of control and closure, but under the pre- and postmodern principles of intertextuality. I hope I am not misconstrued as a electronic Luddite, nostalgically preferring an earlier form of hypertext, for all of my current projects do have an electronic component[61] and I am particularly sensible of the enormous coding and recombinative textualities now available to us in the new medium. But I am disturbed by a supersessionist romanticism that ignores this

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[60] See, for example, Needham for an account of the 'migration' (the removal of 'treasure bindings' from their original 'texts') of bindings as just one specific codicological *exemplum* of the apparently normative recirculation and recombination of medieval texts in relation to their bibliographical 'carriers'.

[61] For example, my essay on 'Morphin Time' is actually misrepresented in the static, linear format of its modernist 'book' production and is best read (viewed?) on my website http://www.intertextual.com. Moreover, this website best reflects my interest in medieval and postmodern intercitationality, again as a bibliographical and conceptual counterweight to the intermediate spatial and linear singularity of the modernist printed book. For the theoretical rationale for this intercitationality, see my *Copy/Right* and *Morphologies* databases, at the same site.

earlier hypertextuality entirely and imagines that 'make it new' means 'disdain the past'. If only the electronic postmodernists were all appropriately sensitive to the ramifications of the prefix that defines their movement and their new textual ontology, and could see that a 'post' implies a 'pre', then an essay like this would not have been necessary.

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

SPEAKING OF MEDIEVALISM: AN INTERVIEW WITH LESLIE J. WORKMAN

RICHARD UTZ

THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEW BEGAN as an unofficial series of questions and answers meant to assist me in writing about Leslie Workman's part in establishing academic medievalism. As such, it was begun as an informal conversation at the Toronto meeting of the Modern Language Association of America in December, 1997, and was later revised and completed via the internet in March, April, and May of 1998. Upon rereading the emerging document I realized that it had become what Paul Zumthor has called the 'passionate memoir', in this case a fascinating subjective glimpse into an individual scholar's genesis which – in turn – shaped the genesis of the working paradigm on which the contributions to this volume depend.[1] The interview underlines one of the essential lessons one can learn from doing research in the realm of medievalism, namely that it is necessary to include the investigating subject as a co-decisive factor in the making of the manifold postmedieval reconstructions of the Middle Ages. I would like to express my gratitude to Leslie Workman for his kind permission to transform the personal information he gave me in this manner, and to Kathleen Verduin for many a helpful hint during the process of compilation. I have added a small number of bibliographic annotations where I thought they might be of use to the reader.

UTZ: Some time ago I asked you to outline for our readers a view of medievalism as a scholarly paradigm which relates to your own biography. What can you tell us about that?

WORKMAN: Well, you asked me to describe how I came to develop the idea of medievalism, and for a long time the only thing I could think of was that it seemed like a good idea at the time. I had the greatest difficulty in reconstructing how I arrived at this position until I realized that what I had to describe was an imaginative and even emotional rather than an intellectual process: and when I had realized this, things started to fall into place. Unfortunately, of course, this obliges me to go back long before my college years, but I hope I can keep it brief.

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[1] While the genre of the personal memoir has always played a certain role in scholarship, Paul Zumthor's *Speaking of the Middle Ages*, trans. by Sarah White (Lincoln, NE, and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), has reminded medievalists that the once dominant philological and positivistic orientation of medieval scholarship has too often excluded the subjective perspective which (early) modern and postmodern studies embraced much earlier.

I was born and grew up in a place called Hanwell, a small community which had only recently been absorbed in greater London. What this meant at that time was that five minutes from my front door in one direction we could find buses and railroad stations which would take us rapidly into London. If I walked in the other direction, however, I found myself at a village green which had been surrounded early in the nineteenth century with suburban villas, and a few steps further would take me to the church which had reputedly been there for fifteen hundred years but a hundred years earlier had been restored to a fare-thee-well by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. The church was at the point where a road to the north from the river Thames had lain since pre-Roman times. Early nineteenth-century Hanwell had been, like Hampstead, a retreat for those in search of health or literary seclusion. Richard Barham, for example, the author of *The Ingoldsby Legends*, had lived there; unfortunately I did not know of this early connection with medievalism until some thirty years later. Looking south from the church, the Horncliffe viaduct of the Great Western Railway, one of Brunel's finest achievements, framed the valley of the little river Brent in a way that Turner might have painted. Crossing the river, one came to a seemingly endless area of farms and golf courses, and the eighteenth-century estate and mansion of Osterley Park.

When I was very young I learned to explore this area with my father, who loved walking, and after his death by myself; later, when I was out of the army and back from the Middle East, and in college in London but still living at home (a great mistake), I used to take these long weekend walks to compose my bi-weekly tutorial essays. By this time I was able to cast over my earlier wanderings what I flattered myself was a Wordsworthian vision: particular views, even particular trees, had a special significance.

A stone's throw from our house in another direction was another very large area of fields and tracks and abandoned "Gothic" buildings. This had been in fact the school or orphan institution where Charlie Chaplin had spent some parts of his childhood. I have since wondered if this area had the same magical effect on his imagination as it did on mine, but I think not: a different mind, a different kind of imagination. Before I was ten I also spent several summers in a small village on the edge of Exmoor at the home of my grandmother's sister, the wife of a blacksmith and farrier whose principal business lay with the hunt, a stag and not a fox hunt, which was unusual. The kitchen in my great-uncle's house can be seen in Cruikshank's illustration to the first English edition of Grimms' *Kinder-und-Hausmärchen* (*German Popular Stories*, 1823), which has decorated the *Studies in Medievalism* Newsletter for several years. I was in fact here when the Second World War started, and attended for a while a village school which is perfectly depicted in the book *Village School* (1955) by 'Miss Read' (Dora Jessie Saint).

This is not I think the occasion to talk about my family: but I feel I must recount a story which is really about reading. My paternal grandmother had a housemaid named Alice, who might have sat for a portrait of the Duchess in

Alice in Wonderland, and the looking glass pictured in *Through the Looking Glass* dominated my grandmother's sitting room. As I recall, this picture shows also the footstool on which I used to play with chessmen or read *The Pilgrim's Progress* in an early nineteenth-century edition. No wonder that the frontier between fact and fiction was indistinct for me. But I could always find myself on one side or the other when I wanted to.

UTZ: What else did you read as a boy?

WORKMAN: I taught myself to read very early and lived in a state of continuous warfare with the ladies of the public library who refused to believe that I could read a book in a day. Shakespeare I discovered when I was twelve, at school; and Wordsworth, when I was sixteen. I will not deny for a moment that the *Clubland Heroes*, as Richard Usborne has described them in a very witty study (1974), that is, the heroes of John Buchan, 'Sapper', and Dornford Yates ranked as high with me as the heroes of Shakespeare's comedies. (I have never had much stomach for tragedy.) If I add that the Second World War started when I was twelve, and that at the end of it I was in the army in Egypt, I think some features of my intellectual, or rather imaginative, development can easily be deduced, especially if I add Kipling to the list. Our Headmaster was very strong on Kipling, Newbolt, and similar writers, and indeed my ideals were early fixed on the colonial or Indian service. In fact after I joined the army I was selected for a commission in the Indian army just about the time when we scuttled out of India. One feature of my imagination was a sense of landscape which I have loosely described as Wordsworthian; I had a strong sense of community in village or suburban life; a very strong sense of place, the *genius loci*; already a strong sense that the English were more fortunate than other European nations in the continuity and organic growth of their institutions; a strong sense of English tradition, of our past. We were fighting for our institutions and our way of life, an idea then being plugged to death by the Army Education Corps.

I have always wanted a life balancing activity and contemplation, which is why I thought of the army or the colonial service. In a way, teaching gave me this: I have always until recently been very active rebuilding a house or messing about with cars; no time for tennis! As time went on, I shifted from the Clubland Heroes to men who did things or met extreme 'natural' challenges (circumstances rather than villains), the heroes of Hammond Innes or Nevil Shute. In the present and probably last stage, my reading has put more emphasis on the inner adventure – J. B. Priestley or Robertson Davies – who give me much greater scope for reflection or fantasy; both, by the way, Jungian writers. But there were many other kinds of books, for instance a surprising number of women writers. I recall now Susan Cooper, Susan Fenimore Cooper, Elizabeth Gaskell, Selma Lagerlöf, Dora Jessie Saint ('Miss Read'), and many more. Incidentally, until recently I did not think of these as 'women writers' but as writers. I am not at all sure that this is a step forward. There were many other kinds of literature: in fact I think it

would be easier and perhaps more revealing to make a list of imaginative interests rather than writers – landscapes, houses, communities, climates – and if you ask me tomorrow I will probably give you a completely different picture. I am like a man looking back from the foothills over a sea of forest through which he has traveled. Let us settle for saying that my imagination, like Stephen Leacock's knight, 'mounted his horse and rode off in all directions'. I can only say that there emerged a definite leaning to the Middle Ages because it is open-ended. It is also very important that I was from the first inclined to the fallacy of seeing the author and the work as one: I dislike Wagner's music intensely, for example, not only because the sound of it so often grates on my ears, but because Wagner was such a pill and I cannot separate the two. I thought in terms of an organic community: a landscape that had come to cohere through time; and this led me to the Middle Ages.

It seemed then very natural to read history in college, and as I recollect it was the influence of C. S. Lewis and Ralph Vaughan Williams which made it English medieval history, though I had hoped from the first to move on from history to literature. The study of history in English universities at that time (1948–1951) was still strongly political and strongly constitutional, and the Victorian gods of Stubbs, Maitland, and Round, together with the Victorian biographers of political leaders like Gladstone and Disraeli, were not overthrown until after I had come down. Great medieval scholars flourished in London, Oxford, and Cambridge at this time, but I did not learn to appreciate them, except for Dom David Knowles.

I read C. S. Lewis, G. K. Chesterton, Charles Williams, also Martin d'Arcy and other popular Catholic theologians, which perhaps needs some explanation. In my early years I was a Congregationalist at home, and at my school a member of the Church of England. This was perhaps the first thing which inclined me, after the usual period of adolescent religious enthusiasm, to sit rather easy to religious questions: and hours in the company of Roman Catholics, who thronged the medieval history school at London, eventually drove me first to a form of Existentialism and then to the views of Teilhard de Chardin which have since come to be called 'process theology'. These views accorded well with an interest in science fiction, which however comes somewhat later in my story. I remember being influenced by the poetry of Eliot, Auden, Spender, MacNeice, and Dylan Thomas (which I understood least), whom some of us met with from time to time, and many others of that generation. Dorothy Sayers' Penguin translation of Dante, which appeared at this time, I read with great enthusiasm, but then so did everybody else. I had long loved *The Hobbit*, but somehow *The Lord of the Rings*, which began to appear at this time, left me cold. Looking back, it seems to me that my mind was singularly unformed, with many enthusiasms but without direction.

UTZ: What were the major influences during your university education and teaching years?

WORKMAN: I found Columbia University in many ways like Kings College, London, but there were significant differences. Under the London system, for example, it was virtually impossible for me as an historian to read anything but history, and the great Skeat and Furnivall library remained closed to me. At Columbia, I sat at the feet of Dino Bigongiari for Dante, Roger Sherman Loomis for medieval literature, and Laura Hibbard Loomis for Chaucer. There were great historians at Columbia then, but not in medieval studies. I should except Elias Bickerman, who took his doctorate from St. Petersburg in 1912, who had known Rostovtseff, and whose Ancient History ranged into the Middle Ages. He was one of those great teachers and scholars who wrote practically nothing, and I owe him much, as I do William MacDonald at Ohio State, another ancient historian who wrote nothing but was a very great teacher.

I left Columbia after one semester to take up a graduate fellowship at the Ohio State University, then a quiet backwater suffused with the recollection of Thurber, where I discovered the eighteenth-century edition of *Domesday Book*, together with a large empty room to read it in, and was able to pursue a dissertation on medieval falconry (under the influence of T. H. White), which I was to resume at Columbia; I also discovered that there was such a thing as American history and that there were some very learned and courteous gentlemen to teach it. Here I began to love and relish what America really stood for: which perhaps explains my attachment to the Midwest.

What London University had not given me was an understanding of what I found when I came to America to be called 'historical method and philosophy', and in fact throughout my London career I had been baffled by the problem of heuristics: at its simplest, How did they know? This question was to be answered for me when I returned to Columbia with a graduate scholarship and took the 'Method and Philosophy' course required of all graduate students. This course had been as I recall the first in the country and was based on Fritz Stern's *Varieties of History* (1956), which had in fact been produced for this course. At Ohio State I had met a very fine German scholar, Walter Dorn, who came to join the Columbia faculty at the same time that I returned there and found himself teaching this course, which amused us both. What I most recall, however, from this experience is a sentence by the American sociologist Morris Cohen which was to inform all my thinking and teaching from this time on: 'The ideal of an imaginative reconstruction of the past which is scientific in its determinations and artistic in its formulation is the ideal to which the greatest of historians have ever aspired.'[2] This was the catalyst which focused all my previous thinking and gave me some kind of direction.

All in all, Columbia had given me a grasp of historical methodology (philosophy I naturally tended to set aside, being an Englishman). I found a way to use this in the work of Arnold Toynbee. The two volume Somervell

[2] *The Meaning of Human History* (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1947), p. 34.

abridgement I found a most useful teaching tool even at freshman level. To this I added *Reconsiderations* (volume 12 of the complete works). It seems to me eminently practical and pragmatic, and I cannot understand why Toynbee has been accused of 'idealism' but even of mysticism. Conversely, I have no patience whatever with the cloudy generalizations of German metaphysical historians like Oswald Spengler, and I cannot understand why Toynbee has been accused not only of idealism but even mysticism.

Later, I was naturally led to branch out into subjects related and/or ancillary. I remember particularly, for example, *The Idea of Pre-history* by Glyn Daniels[3] and his other works on archaeology. There is now of course a large number of popular works about classical archaeology which caught the general imagination back in the 60s notably, in my view, the ones by my old friend and colleague at City College New York, Leo Deuel, beginning with *The Treasures of Time*.[4] I also read a great deal of older scholarship, for example, two still invaluable works: *The Transition in English Historical Writing 1760-1830* by Thomas Preston Peardon, and *Attitudes of Seventeenth-Century France toward the Middle Ages* by Nathan Edelman.[5] This taught me a very valuable lesson about scholarship, namely that scholarly works are not always superseded but simply bypassed because scholarly inquiry or fashion takes a different direction. Sometimes work of this kind embodies the insights of a great scholar, such as a small book *Great Historical Enterprises* by Dom David Knowles.[6]

The teaching years, from 1958 to the early 70s, enlarged my historical thinking considerably. In the first place, the fiercely competitive world of freshman texts on world or western civilization of necessity dealt with many things outside politics, economics, and religion as graduate schools still did not. Freeman's dictum that 'history is past politics' was still quoted with approval, and while I felt this was very wrong I was not competent to quarrel with it. I did however rush through my one year of freshman history survey in order to devote three or four weeks to the future, and this I believe was a first in the American classroom. I had by now discovered science fiction, and I bitterly regretted that I had not profited by the acquaintance of Arthur C. Clarke, whom I had known at Kings College, London. Other gurus of the 60s besides Arthur Clarke, Isaac Asimov, and indeed many other science fiction writers included T. H. White, Philip Wylie, and James Branch Cabell. I continued to read the literary criticism,

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[3] (London: Watts, 1962; Cleveland and New York: World Publishing, 1963); a 2nd edn (co-authored by Glyn Daniels and Colin Renfrew) appeared with Edinburgh University Press in 1988.

[4] *The Treasures of Time: First-Hand Accounts by Famous Archaeologists of their Work in the Near East*, ed. by Leo Deuel (Cleveland: World Publishing, 1961; London: Souvenir, 1962).

[5] Peardon, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1933); Edelman, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1946).

[6] (London and New York: Nelson, 1964).

together with the fiction and fantasy, of C. S. Lewis, and the fantasy and poetry of Charles Williams, whose very precious theological criticism, however, I found hard to take. I read Evelyn Waugh, but otherwise very little modern fiction. Fortunately I had brought with me from England a fine collection of Arthur Machen. When my exile became onerous I discovered Angela Thirkell, who was later replaced by 'Miss Read', whose books on English country life I believe will become classics.

UTZ: Do you remember the moment when you thought of medievalism as a new academic subject?

WORKMAN: Well, that's the question we have been working up to, and I think what I have been saying is that there was not a 'moment': there was a powerful but largely unconscious tide. My training at Columbia had shown me how history is constructed by historians, and my teaching experience led me to realize the implications of this. Now since the beginning of the 60s I had taught in liberal arts colleges, and although the libraries of adjacent universities were always available I could not always make use of them, and I could not build my teaching around them. For these and similar reasons I tended to rely more on resources of the college library or of my own library. This was another small but significant factor pushing me toward the study not of the Middle Ages themselves but of the scholars, artists, and writers who had constructed the idea of the Middle Ages that we inherited: the books were more accessible. I realized too how diverse these ideas were. This approach to the Middle Ages gave me a rationalization, if you like, for the study of the Pre-Raphaelites and other nineteenth-century artists and writers, and I had been interested in William Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites since I was in high school. Anyway, I began to realize how the consciousness of the Middle Ages as a field of study, as something different from the postmedieval world, came into being. I discovered Wallace Ferguson's remarkable book *The Renaissance in Historical Thought* (1948), which showed how the Renaissance had created the Middle Ages as the villain, the Doppelgänger of the story. If this was inverted, you had what we now call 'medievalism'. Another most important factor was teaching 'Method and Philosophy', in fact the history of historical study, myself. When I realized that the modern study of history had begun in the fifteenth century with the study of the Middle Ages, I was there. Another factor was that medievalism, in origin and for the first hundred years, was an English movement.

UTZ: You have been called more than once the Founder of Medievalism. Could this be true?

WORKMAN: Yes and no. In the early twentieth century, medievalism was virtually driven off the field by two things: primarily the First World War, which overwhelmingly discredited the whole ethos of 'chivalry' to which ruling classes

across Europe had committed themselves; and secondly by Romanticism, a process which I have described in my article 'Medievalism and Romanticism'.[7] In the thirties, medievalism was almost completely moribund except in the work of one or two men like H. N. Fairchild, and in Kenneth Clark's *Gothic Revival* (1928). Then there appeared a number of articles by Alice Chandler which seemed to match the direction of my thinking unusually well. Before this time medievalism was little more than a tendency or fashion very loosely defined: it was not an academic 'subject' or specialization. Curiously enough, it was not until 1973 or even later that I discovered that Chandler's papers had been collected in 1970 into a book titled *A Dream of Order*, which set out the whole question. It must be remembered in my defense that I still thought of myself as an historian and still subscribed to the *American Historical Review* rather than the *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*.

In the scholarly sense, therefore, Alice Chandler is the founder of modern medievalism, and the influence of her book has deservedly continued to grow. In the academic or institutional sense, however, yes, I am the founder of medievalism, since I first organized conference sessions, later a whole annual conference, established *Studies in Medievalism* and other publications, and a Newsletter, and gave the word an institutional meaning and presence. Alice Chandler might have continued to write about medievalism, but in the event she became a college President, and although she continued to publish extensively it was not about medievalism. I am very happy to record, however, that just before her retirement from the presidency of the New York State University College at New Paltz she was persuaded to deliver an outstanding keynote address at the Tenth International Conference on Medievalism, and we hope that this signals her return to the field. The question really is, then, would medievalism have become academically acceptable if I had not done something about it twenty years ago? I can only say that judging by the trouble we had, it would have taken a lot longer to happen. Then, of course, Norman Cantor's book, *Inventing the Middle Ages*, came along in 1991 and changed the whole picture.[8] I should also point out that the first of Ulrich Müller's conferences on *Mittelalter-Rezeption* in Salzburg was also in 1979,[9] and a little later, I think, Professor Toshiyuki Takamiya established his seminar at Keio University in Tokyo, though we did not hear about either of these for some time. In other words, these things are in the air until somebody draws a shape around them.

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[7] In *Medievalism and Romanticism 1750-1850*, ed. by Leslie J. Workman, special double issue of *Poetica* 39/40 (1994), 1-44.

[8] *Inventing the Middle Ages: The Lives, Works, and Ideas of the Great Medievalists of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Morrow, 1991).

[9] The proceedings volumes to these conferences on *Mittelalter-Rezeption*, ed. by Urlich Müller, have appeared in the series Göppinger Arbeiten zur Germanistik (Göppingen: Kümmerle, 1979–).

UTZ: Did you find the scholarly world receptive to the idea of medievalism?

WORKMAN: Not at all. The academic world was not at all receptive to the idea of medievalism, in fact we encountered not simply indifference but resistance and downright hostility – except for a few scholarly administrators of vision such as Otto Gründler of Kalamazoo and Paul Szarmach and Bernard Rosenthal at SUNY-Binghamton, and Müller and Takamiya, and of course the people who came to our conferences and got hooked. In fact I still find this hard to understand. Our audience has grown very slowly.

The situation changed early in the 90s. The catalyst I think was undoubtedly Norman Cantor's *Inventing the Middle Ages*, which gave a lot of rather rigid minds a shaking up which in my view they sorely needed and richly deserved.

UTZ: When did you found *Studies in Medievalism*?

WORKMAN: I founded it in 1976. That was the year of our first program at Kalamazoo. I talked to a couple of friends at Miami University; Britton Harwood was particularly helpful. There was an occasion when I drove Brit back to Oxford, Ohio, from the Kalamazoo Congress, something like a six-hour drive in the middle of the night, during which Brit took my mind apart, examined all the pieces critically and carefully, put them back together again, and decided to give me his support – which enabled us to publish the first issue in 1979.

UTZ: One major advantage and challenge of medievalism is that it is inclusive of all kinds of academic disciplines. How did you work to make *Studies in Medievalism* interdisciplinary?

WORKMAN: Not hard enough. We just never had the resources, for example, to circularize the AHA as well as the MLA. Newsletters were a great help to us here, but it was not really enough. You must understand that our resources were always limited; for the first couple of issues I was pounding it out on a typewriter on the kitchen table after a day working with pick, shovel, and jackhammer for the gas company.

UTZ: Why was that?

WORKMAN: The college at which I was teaching closed its doors in 1974 (it should not have happened, but that is another story). Various commitments prevented me from moving. I enjoyed those days and they were healthy: but I have news for the people who think that this kind of activity frees up the mind for intellectual endeavor (despite the evidence of Machiavelli to the contrary). I might add too that manual labor is fine for a graduate student; it can be something of a trauma for a sedentary scholar of forty-four. I had two other ideas at the time: one was to be a plumber, the other was to be a poet, which would

not of course have fed me. In the event I opted for scholarship and started a journal – which has not of course fed me either. I was a fair carpenter and might have been a good plumber.

UTZ: As an independent scholar, how did you get the journal published during the Eighties?

WORKMAN: Funnily enough, we thought this would be easy. We had the naive idea that many institutions would be glad to publish a journal which was prepared for them and which cost very little. Understandably, indeed properly, institutions preferred to publish material emanating from their own faculty. Eventually we were happy enough to light on an institution which saw it our way, and this is the place for a tribute to Nicholas Ranson of the University of Akron and his chairman Paul Merrix. But difficulties developed, due I think simply to the fact that we were last on their list of priorities, and this arrangement broke down.

We take great pride in the fact that the journal was almost adopted by the University of Chicago Press, which takes on perhaps one journal a year out of many applicants. Finally we were competing with another journal for the one place, until we were flushed out by the marketing department, who said essentially that there was no market for medievalism. It did no good to answer that that was precisely what we were planning to remedy, and our evidence was intangible – the response we met at conferences.

Incidentally, the 'WE' I am now using is not simply editorial. I married in October, 1983, and I now think this is one of the best decisions my wife ever made. I moved to Michigan, where my wife is on the faculty of Hope College. This added the discipline of literature to that of history and thus enlarged our range of critical weapons. We discuss every decision, and I frequently let her win. *Studies in Medievalism* would certainly not exist today but for Kathleen. Not only has she written more on the subject than I have, but I must make clear that she carries the monstrous burden not only of copy-editing but, in these days when even the best journals demand camera-ready copy, of preparing all our material for the printer – an impossible burden. We have plans to pass this burden on: it cannot happen too soon. When I begin to feel that I too am her creation, like a creature in a Walter de la Mare story, it will be time for me to quit.

UTZ: How does your idea of medievalism differ from Chandler's book?

WORKMAN: Very little if at all. Of course I was from the first convinced that medievalism was coterminous with modern civilization in the terms of Acton's statement which *Studies in Medievalism* uses as an epigraph,[10] so I have labored

[10] Acton's epigraph is from an unpublished paper written about 1859, printed in Herbert Butterfield, *Man On His Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), p. 212: 'Two great principles divide the world, and contend for the mastery, antiquity

to extend it back to the sixteenth century and forward to the twentieth, which it is possible that Alice would not have cared to do. Again, I started out as an historian, whereas Alice is a literary scholar – although nowadays, to be sure, such a distinction means less and less.

UTZ: Why did you decide to start an annual conference on medievalism?

WORKMAN: It seemed to me a way to increase our market, increase our readership, and acquire useful publicity, and I thought it would be fun – as indeed it has been. I was not foolish enough to expect to make money, but in fact we have always paid our way.

By this time, the late Eighties, I had come to realize that what we now call (absurdly) 'postmodern criticism' was not about to roll up and go away, and I had better come to terms with it. Or to put that another way, I had better bring my thinking up to date. This became easier when my wife, Kathleen, started to teach it. We did what we could to reshape the future policy of the journal. My latest editorial (*Studies in Medievalism VIII, Medievalism in Europe II*) sums up this development. Unfortunately, the onward march of critical thinking rendered my words irrelevant before they were printed. In the interval 'process' had ceased to be a useful term in common usage and has become a jargon term of modern criticism – yet another good word lost to us. In fact I have not come to terms with this kind of criticism, for two reasons. One is that fascinating though it is, it seems to me only incidentally about literature: it is about criticism. Secondly, as René Wellek has pointed out in a very powerful passage, the more traditional forms of criticism survive and indeed remain essential.[11]

This is not really the place to dwell on our failures; but I cannot help referring to some things which should have gone right but didn't, notably our second series, *The Year's Work in Medievalism*, which I persist in thinking should be more of a success than *Studies in Medievalism* itself. It is based on two ideas. One is to get out conference papers, minimally edited, at conference length as quickly as possible as a basis for ongoing work in the field; and secondly, to publish book reviews, surveys of literature, together with news of the field and similar material, which a strict page limit has obliged us to keep out of *Studies in Medievalism* itself. I still think this is a good, indeed a necessary idea, and I think if someone picks it up it will far outstrip *Studies in Medievalism*. It is what most people want and need to know. In fact I think that our failure to publish bibliography – and we have the bibliographies ready, incidentally – and book reviews has crippled our entire endeavor.

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and the middle ages. These are the two civilizations that have preceded us, the two elements of which ours is composed. All political as well as religious questions reduce themselves practically to this. This is the great dualism that runs through society.'

[11] *A History of Modern Criticsm*, 8 vols (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), VI: *American Criticism 1900-1950* (1986), p. 298.

UTZ: As you look back over the last twenty years, what do you consider the greatest achievement of *Studies in Medievalism*?

WORKMAN: Simply to have existed. I do not say or think that we have done it as well as it could be done had we had support and resources; indeed, I know we haven't. But we did it.

UTZ: What changes do you expect to see in medievalism in the near future?

WORKMAN: Well, I am waiting confidently for the moment, which I expect quite soon, when French scholars or rather American scholars of French studies, which is a somewhat different thing, will tell us that it all happened in France. But that is scarcely a problem: demonstrably, it happened here, specifically in Kalamazoo.

UTZ: In recent years, we have heard more and more scholarly voices discussing the past and future of the discipline called medieval studies.[12] What do you think is the current relationship between medievalism and medieval studies?

WORKMAN: The whole tendency of modern or contemporary scholarship is in the direction of what we now call 'process'. If we reach conclusions they are provisional: we are really looking to the next move forward. My ideas about the immediate future are set out (perhaps too cautiously) in the editorial to the latest issue of *Studies in Medievalism*.

What I think will happen is that medievalism will adopt more of the attitude of historicism and that medieval studies will adopt more of the approach and procedure of medievalism. I think medieval studies and medievalism are moving closer and will continue to do so, though not to the point of becoming one and the same thing. I am thinking particularly of those papers on Makers of the Middle Ages, the people who have shaped our picture of the Middle Ages, which we have been sponsoring for some years now at Kalamazoo. I think not only that people want to hear more of the kind of thing that Norman Cantor told them about how the ideas of medieval scholars were shaped by their society and personal history, but how these things determined their thinking. I think that the two volumes we are about to publish, on 'Medievalism and the Academy', which in fact deal with medievalism both inside and outside the Academy, will do much to illuminate this question. In the nineteenth century, the lines between those

[12] See, e.g., the contributions in: *From Medieval to Medievalism*, ed. by John Simons (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), *The Past and Future of Medieval Studies*, ed. by John Van Engen (Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), and *The Future of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: Problems, Trends, and Opportunities in Research*, ed. by Roger Dahood (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998).

inside or outside the Academy were much more loosely drawn. William Stubbs, for example, did most of his magisterial work for the *Rolls Series* from a country parsonage like many others. And then the volumes which Helen Damico is publishing about medieval historiography are, I would say, both medievalism and medieval studies.

UTZ: There is now something termed the 'New Medievalism'. What are your relations to that, and what do you think about it?

WORKMAN: I am glad you asked: I suppose it has to be dealt with, even though a Festschrift as I understand it is surely a happy occasion, and this subject strikes rather a wrong note. Also, the story goes back quite a long way. On the other hand, this is intended to be a just account of the creation of medievalism as I see it, which must include our mistakes, of which I think this was the biggest. The story is also a good example of what happens when I do not trust my instinct or judgment.

The story begins with the English translation edited by Eugene Vance of *Parler du Moyen Age* by Paul Zumthor; so there had already been delay before my interest was directed to the subject. The flags went up when I noted that in a brief introduction Vance had half a dozen times mistranslated the word *médiévisme* as 'medievalism', which it most certainly is not. I decided to review this book and wrote a long essay review which gave me a great deal of trouble and was appropriately laudatory. I was obliged, however, to deal with the problem that Zumthor had apparently never heard of the entire phenomenon of medievalism in England. I then took advice from a highly qualified friend in French studies, who advised me against publishing it on the grounds of the delay and also, as I recall, on the grounds of rocking the boat. My first mistake was to think that this phenomenon would just go away anyway, and my second was to take this advice and not publish the review. My third mistake was not keeping abreast of the field of philology. I think that deep in my mind I was misled by Arnold: 'Truth is truth and shall prevail, though none care whether it prevail or not.'

Cutting the story short brings us to the latest volume by R. Howard Bloch and Stephen G. Nichols, *Medievalism and the Modernist Temper* (1996), a collection of excellent essays on what is in effect medievalism. Both you, Richard, and I have dealt with this book in reviews.[13] The problem is in the introductory essay signed by both Nichols and Bloch, although Bloch's part of it has been used three times before, so it can scarcely be regarded as unconsidered. On the first page of this he offers a number of definitions of medieval studies and refers to a number of graduate programs and journals in this field. He says nothing about medievalism and nothing whatever about the one journal devoted to medievalism, which is, of course, *Studies in Medievalism*.

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[13] See Leslie Workman's review in *Arthuriana*, 7.1 (1997), 161-63, and my reviews in *Arthuriana*, 7.1 (1997), 159-60, and in *The Medieval Review* (1998; forthcoming)

I cannot help feeling that a great opportunity to establish a dialogue has been missed here. There are clearly many differences between the way Francophile scholars view medievalism and the way we do. Certainly I cannot without help see a place for a 'New Medievalism' when it has taken us twenty years to establish medievalism. I do not count the hundred years or so when the term was occasionally in use but before my colleagues and I had established it in the academy. I am left in fact without the faintest idea of what these critics mean by medievalism, new or otherwise, and that is why I really have nothing to say about it at this point. This seems a great pity.

One or two cautionary comments must however be made now. The first is that Bloch begins his story in the middle of the nineteenth century, ignoring all that has gone before – the Romantic movement and the emergence of medievalism, which had swept like a tidal wave across the English-speaking world. This apparently is in the interests of making the focus of the story French, which it is not. Next, and more important, Bloch and Nichols' book, and this is perhaps where we really differ, deals only with academic medievalism. This is a classically French point of view, and I strongly disagree. In our view (following Acton) medievalism was a broad social movement in which the academic element certainly played a leading part. Fortunately there are now plenty of scholars to treat French medievalism in a more inclusive manner. This is the place to mention a six-page prospectus of a French project, *La fabrique du moyen âge*, which has recently crossed my desk. It is supported by three French universities, involves a great number of people, and is elaborately organized. However, it restricts itself to the nineteenth century, which I consider a mistake. But it shows us quite clearly which way the wind is blowing.

UTZ: Before we turn to the future, I wish you would clarify something you said about the open-ended nature of medieval studies.

WORKMAN: First, let us be clear that we no longer think in terms of sharp contrasts between classical and medieval studies. We must think rather in terms of polarities, shifting frontiers, which are constantly changing. For a number of reasons, medieval studies (and hence medievalism) are however open-ended in a way that classical studies I think are not. That being said, let me shamelessly avoid the question by giving just one example. In 1964, there appeared a very small book (it was in fact an institutional lecture), *The Oldest Irish Tradition; A Window on the Iron Age*, by Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson.[14] Most people know, though they rarely remember, that Ireland was never absorbed into the Roman empire; consequently, Ireland was Christianized, most unusually, not by force but by persuasion, and as a consequence colleges of Irish bards existed side by side in cordial relations with Christian monasteries. So the native culture had bypassed classical culture and goes back directly to the period of the Indo-European

[14] (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964).

migrations. Parallels between Celtic Irish and the earliest Greek tradition as recorded in Homer, as Jackson points out, are striking, and this takes us back to the fourteenth to twelfth centuries B.C. I put this in the context of an important article on the Indo-European migrations which I read in *Scientific American* about this time (the early 1960s). Here then is a truly unique window on a virtually limitless vista of Neolithic culture, to corroborate and explain which we know otherwise only by archeology: and this window opens from the Middle Ages.

UTZ: What are your own plans for future studies in medievalism?

WORKMAN: First and foremost, what I think of as the 'Big Book'. There is a desperate need for some kind of survey of the whole field, something that at least sets out the questions. Some time ago I gave up the idea of doing this myself, for several reasons, and decided it should be a collaborative venture. Not an anthology, as some publishers have wished to call it, but a history or survey of the subject based on chapters by different authors but all carefully integrated. It is a big subject and covers a very wide range of topics, and I think this is the only way to handle it. Moreover, in this way I think we can get it done quite quickly, which is very important. As I see it, before everyone can start happily deconstructing there must be something for them to play with.

Now, if you will permit me, I think we have two questions here which I will deal with in turn. The first question concerns the future policy of *Studies in Medievalism*, which in fact I hope to hand over soon to somebody else. I have always thought the direct relationship between medieval scholarship and the arts extremely important, and I would like to see us do more with this. A few years ago we secured copies of a German TV film, *Parzival*, which we were able to make available on loan in this country. At our Conference in Worcester in 1995, we inspired the organizer, Jim Gallant, to produce a version of Southey's 1794 play *Wat Tyler*, which may in fact have been the first production ever, and we thought it was a great success. We have incorporated a program of medievalist music in our annual Conference; we mounted the first American production (although the holders of the copyright restricted it to a dramatic reading) of Christoph Hein's *Die Ritter der Tafelrunde* in a first and original translation by our friend Eva Richter, and we find it truly shocking that the German holders of the copyright were able to inhibit any further production. So I would like to see us do a great deal more in this direction. We have also done our best to secure a production at a large American or English conference of the English version, which was made for us, of Nils Holger Petersen's exciting opera *A Vigil for Thomas Becket*, so far without success. I think an important opportunity has been missed here; however, we recently attended in Copenhagen the premiere of the Danish version of this work. There is a lot to be done in this direction.

As for what I want to do personally with medievalism, there are a number of papers on shorter subjects which I hope to write, partly because in twenty years nobody has offered me these papers. To take just one example, nobody has ever

offered me a paper on Richard Harris Barham, the author of *The Ingoldsby Legends*, which I find incredible. I also find it incredible that nobody, except Northrop Frye himself, has done anything with Thomas Lovell Beddoes, a most important Romantic poet, and certainly a major figure in the Gothic, or medievalism. I have plans for a number of papers on medievalism, including a very substantial one now in progress on Robertson Davies and the Arthurian material.

Next, we might revive our plans for anthologies of different kinds on medievalism – very practical ideas we had ten or more years ago when nobody wanted to talk to us about it. Now should be the time.

UTZ: Do you have any plans for work in other areas besides medievalism?

WORKMAN: I have been considering turning some attention from medievalism itself to country literature – actually a very closely related subject. Professor Verduin and I will be offering a course in this next year, and judging by the materials available it will be something of a novelty – that is to say, nobody seems to be publishing the books for such a course.

Beyond this, I am fascinated by what I call the question of probability and possibility in historical hypotheses. Looking back, I seem to think of a number of subjects to which I was attracted before their time was right. As an undergraduate at London, for example, I was attracted to the Arthurian period, the fifth century. But the chairman of the history department of my college, and it pains me to record that he was a Welshman, dismissed this as 'airy-fairy nonsense': salvation was wrought by Tudor economic documents. In fact, though I did not know it, Nora Chadwick and those around her were even then I think working on the Arthurian period at Cambridge. Nowadays we are almost overwhelmed with speculation about the 'historical Arthur'. All that we can say is that if you consider in every detail the history of the fifth century you will find what I can only describe as 'an Arthur-shaped space' in the middle. I believe there is a great deal to be done on these lines, although I am not sure that I am the man to do it.

My interest in the Pre-Raphaelites in the Forties was similarly premature.[15] Again, in the early 60s when I was teaching in Pennsylvania I was led by local discoveries to take an interest in supposed Phoenician landings in America, which were then universally ridiculed; but now, as a result of the work of Barry Fell of Harvard and his colleagues, are regarded as commonplace. There are many other examples. So I hope that in the future I shall be able to devote some time to

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[15] For more information on Leslie Workman's 'premature' interest in the Pre-Raphaelites, see his recent review of *An Anthology of Pre-Raphaelite Writings*, ed. by Carolyn Hares-Stryker (Washington Square: New York University Press, 1997) in *Prolepsis: The Tübingen Review of English Studies* (15.1.1998): http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/uni/nes/prolepsis/98_2_wor.html.

possibility and probability, as important elements of the informed and creative historical imagination.

UTZ: What do you read now?

WORKMAN: I have read constantly, voraciously, and usually carelessly throughout my life, as I said earlier. In the first place, I have read professionally history and latterly literary criticism, preferably the more old-fashioned kinds, carefully and with notes and so on. Personally or privately, I have read biography (a lot of that; what was I searching for?), travel (specially the nineteenth century), poetry, less and less fiction except for a few favorite authors who currently range from Nevil Shute to J. B. Priestley to Robertson Davies. Some books in these categories I read again and again, since what I am looking for is the familiar starting place for my own imagination or fantasy, so that the book itself scarcely comes into it at all: and it can be a good book or otherwise. C. S. Lewis's little book on criticism *(An Experiment in Criticism*, 1961) is very good on this subject. This is sheer escape, which however sometimes opens a window onto what we call, ironically I hope, reality. One book in this category is Nora Chadwick's *Poetry and Letters in Early Christian Gaul* (1955). Another is *Farthest North* (1897), Frithiof Nansen's account of the voyage of the Fram, the boat which was deliberately locked in the Northern ice field in the hope that it would drift over the site of the North Pole. There are many games to play with these books, notably of course what do they do when the book is over, when they have settled down on that sheep station in Australia or the country house in fifth-century Gaul.

There is also the breakdown of the frontier between fact and fiction. I have always found it very easy to surrender to a play or novel (films generally tell me too much of what I would envision differently). It is easier to believe in Sir John Falstaff and Mistress Quickly than in Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth. All this I think suggests the historical mind *en pantoufles*, which brings us back to the imagination. – *Isn't this where we came in?*

Just a footnote perhaps: I set out to provide a sketch map of the life of the imagination and I think I have done that. I have therefore omitted not only my family, which was very important, but also my principal interests, which were, quite simply, quite simply Wine, Women, and Song, and the last of these not least. I am proud of the fact that my first employment in North America was as a chorister at St. John's Cathedral in New York. You can scarcely get more medieval than that [...].

LESLIE WORKMAN: A SPEECH OF THANKS

WILLIAM CALIN

YEARS AGO, AT ANOTHER university, whenever we discussed tenure or promotion questions, a friend of mine, one of the pioneers in D. N. A., regularly asked: 'Has X or Y contributed a significant original idea?' I had to answer, 'Look, Aaron, if we in the Humanities had to operate under those conditions, none of us would have tenure. There would be tens of thousands of us, all adjuncts, wandering from job to job, like the tired ones on the Mountain of Purgatory.' On the other hand, under those conditions, Leslie Workman would have an endowed chair and an institute named after him . . . .

Leslie Workman has contributed two significant original ideas. The first of these, and the most important, is the Idea of Medievalism. For Leslie, medievalism is not just a theme in Ruskin or Rossetti. He understands medievalism as the perception (and the continued existence, the impact) of the Middle Ages in all succeeding periods, the Middle Ages as seen from 1500 (or, in Italy, still earlier) to the present. Secondly, given the impact of medievalism, he understands it to be one of the determining cultural forces in the history of the modern West, medievalism as the opposite of and a counterweight to classicism. From this vantage point, medievalism stands as an equal to classicism. Both are 'inventions' of the subsequent early modern and modern centuries, both are permanent models and icons, patterns of attraction, for subsequent writers and artists. Both are largely determinant of our high artistic culture and of much of our popular culture as well.

From the first significant original idea is derived the second: Romanticism is Medievalism and Medievalism is Romanticism. Leslie has worked to show, from a strictly historical perspective, the predominant role of medievalism in the emergence of romanticism. Historically and also phenomenologically, romanticism can be accounted for as medievalism, as a discovery, formulation, and reconception of the Middle Ages. Also, most subsequent manifestations of medievalism can be deemed outgrowths of or throwbacks to romanticism and that they are, partially or wholly, romantic in their essence.

Having had his two significant original ideas, Leslie then proceeded to devote to them the rest of his life. (Twentieth-century men don't do this.) In devotion to medievalism, Leslie founded and edited journals: *Studies in Medievalism* and *The Year's Work in Medievalism*. He

launched the *Studies in Medievalism* annual conferences and organized and presided over the medievalism sessions at Kalamazoo. He fought for and brought into existence the graduate summer Institute on Medievalism at the University of York and is now the driving force behind the collaborative history of medievalism which will be the first to cover the whole field. All of this without institutional support.

For, without institutional support, Leslie created a discipline and an institution. In the early years and at the early conferences we were all amateurs. This was part of the joy in those days, discovering new concepts and making new friends, bringing from our own disciplines grist for Leslie's mill, material for his idea. We were helping to create a discipline.

Now, we are no longer all amateurs. There are now specialists in medievalism. The discipline exists. It functions as part and parcel of the study of literature, history, and the arts in the academy. It shall endure, fifty years from now, two hundred years from now, having helped to shape the present and future vision of the history of Western culture and also, I dare to say, the history of academic (institutional) culture in our twentieth century.

Twentieth-century men don't do these things. Not in this way. They don't have this sense of commitment and devotion. Leslie is not a twentieth-century man. He is a nineteenth-century man in the tradition of Carlyle, Mill, Ruskin, and, above all, Scott. One of the lessons of the emergence of medievalism as a discipline and, now, as an institution, is a human one. My life is immensely richer because Leslie Workman is part of it.

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA